

Remarks prepared for TOPIK

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Thank you very much for this opportunity to join with the other panelists to discuss how we as Episcopalian and Anglicans from our respective nations, can advocate for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. I am very aware that we on this platform are bound together, not only by our proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but also geopolitically, as the nations from which we come are intertwined in very complex ways. Japan, China, Taiwan and the United States as nations all dance with each other politically, economically, socially and militarily. Sometimes this is a very dangerous dance.

I am aware that the underlying foundation of all United States foreign policy is based on issues of security. The U.S. always asks: What will best serve the interests (I might add selfish interests) of the United States? I am convinced that my country will never achieve the respect it craves from the international community until its foreign policy is based on a different foundation and a different question. It needs to ask: What will best serve the interests of the global community?

The Churches role in seeking reconciliation globally - which is our mission embedded in Scripture - and specifically in seeking reunification on the Korean peninsula, means advocating our values to the corridors of power. The Church is at root a counter cultural body, because we place our faith and our actions not in militarism and wealth, but in the values of Christ, who, by refusing the path of power and rejecting violence became the example for all humanity to embrace.

Therefore, our task at this conference is to identify, in quite specific terms, what

our voices, which hold no power other than moral persuasion, can say to advance the cause of reunification. Admittedly, as a worldwide institution we do have certain trappings of power and influence, in the Anglican world most notably at Lambeth Palace. But our ultimate authority rests on our ability to interpret the values of the Gospel and what justice demands.

We must be models of the values we wish to see our nations embrace. I am aware sitting on this stage with my longtime brother and friend, the primate of Japan, Nathaniel Uematsu, that we have made important steps in the work of reconciliation between our two Churches, if not our countries. In late 1995, our Presiding Bishop, Edmond Browning, joined in a statement of religious leaders in the United States and formally apologized for the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Several months later the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, at a historic mission consultation in Kiyosato, issued a courageous apology for its complicity in Japan's war of aggression against its Asian neighbors, as well as the United States. Building on these historic initiatives, the Episcopal Church's General Convention declared its own remorse in 1997 for the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Two bishops of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai attended that Convention. Two years ago Presiding Bishop Griswold visited Hiroshima and affirmed the reconciliation that has been and still is being forged between our two Churches, even though there are critics in our countries, and in our Churches, who are not ready to undertake the important work of Christ's reconciling love.

These steps of reconciliation are precisely the witness we must make to the world that offer a vision, as Desmond Tutu has described, of God's dream for us.

The work of reconciliation between the Church in Japan and in the U.S. has been ongoing since 1995. The work for reunification of the Korean Peninsula has also been ongoing for many years, and with increased energy since the Lambeth Conference of 1998 and the meeting of the Anglican Peace and Justice Network in Seoul in 1999. Many people are responsible for the present vision and work towards reunification, but none more so than The Honorable and Reverend Jae Joung Lee, who attended the 1996 Anglican Peace and Justice Network meeting held in New York and Washington, D.C., and who pressed the Network to hold its next meeting in Seoul. His role today as cabinet secretary for reunification in the government of the Republic of Korea is

testament to his fortitude as a true servant of Christ. I also salute the primates, clergy and lay leaders of the Anglican Church of Korea over these past years, especially our host today, Archbishop Francis Park, for their faithful witness for reunification.

The meeting of the Anglican Peace and Justice Network in Seoul in 1999 further catapulted the reunification of Korea onto the agenda of the Anglican Communion and has made it a topic of concern at subsequent meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council.

With respect to the United States, my own country, we might find some insight into our efforts towards reunification in the unfolding of events since the inauguration of the Bush Administration in 2001. Shortly after the tragedy of September 11 of that year, President Bush famously referred to North Korea as part of the “axis of evil” in his State of the Union address to Congress. This greatly heightened tensions on the Peninsula and fed North Korean fears that the United States might invade its country, which were further exacerbated when the U.S. invaded Iraq, another “member” of the so called “axis of evil”. Tensions escalated yet again as North Korea responded by dismissing nuclear inspectors and announcing its intentions to develop nuclear weapons, culminating in the detonation of a nuclear device last year.

These developments were the low points of U.S. – North Korea relations, and also hurt U.S. – South Korea relations as well. In the midst of all this, the Episcopal Church, USA, accepted the invitation in 2002 from the Anglican Church of Korea for members of its national peace commission to visit Seoul and the DMZ. As a consequence of this visit, the Episcopal Church adopted a policy calling on its government to reject the demonization of North Korea and to forswear use of a pre-emptive strike in exchange for North Korea’s abandonment of its nuclear weapons program. The policy statement also called upon the U.S. to provide generous increased humanitarian assistance to the suffering North Korean people.

Now it would be wonderful to proclaim that our joint partnership was influential in the promising outcome in which North Korea and the United States have, in fact, reached such agreement. But we really don’t know, and it really doesn’t matter what our influence, however small, may actually have been. We made the witness that

needed to be made.

Looking ahead, it is equally important to note that other challenges from the Episcopal Church, USA, to the U.S. government and North Korea still go unmet, especially moving to conclude a non-aggression pact in which all parties would achieve a comprehensive peace, formally ending the state of war that has existed since 1953. Since this latter challenge involves the other nations represented on this panel, and , of course most importantly, South Korea as well as the wider international community, might our advocacy for a final status peace agreement be one of the outcomes to which we commit ourselves at this conference as an essential and urgent step towards reunification?

Indeed, the chance for our churches – especially in Korea, Japan, China and the United States – to work in partnership for such a goal would be a significant witness of Christ’s reconciling love for all humanity.

There are other steps we can take and I hope our final statement tomorrow will hold up other proposed specific actions. But perhaps the most important message we can make at this conference is that we are united from our various locations around the world to the work of the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, one country for one people, and that we will not go away until we have seen this part of God’s dream for us realized in this wonderful land.

Gam sa hamni da.