

**From brokenness and ruin to trust and understanding:
GBCS Statement on North Korea's Nuclear Test**

Lord,

Who will dare obstruct your plans?

Though the sharp teeth of barbed-wire fences remain along the truce line,

Coming and going over those fences

Are the hearts of the divided families,

With their sharing of wisdom for life together,

And their care and concern for each other.

These have laid down the base for our future peaceful community.

Lord,

We thank you for giving us new opportunities.

Rather than clinging to outdated pride in our past leadership role for reunification and peace,

May we, the churches of North and South, embrace a greater value:

Our hope in a new day filled with strength and vitality, a new day we will build together.

We believe

That the peaceful economic and cultural community we dream of

Will result from the hope that binds our hearts together.

However fierce may be the suffering that we face,

However fearsome may be the storms that try us,

We steadfastly believe in the amazing plan of God, who has brought us out of brokenness and ruin and into a relationship of trust and understanding.

***(Excerpts from the Common Prayer for Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula,
jointly prepared by the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Korea Christian
Federation)***

We, the members of the Board of Directors of the General Board of Church and Society express our deep concern at the reported nuclear testing by North Korea. This nuclear testing undermines peninsular, regional and global peace and security and jeopardizes the wish and prayer of the Korean people for reunification, and we therefore condemn it. The purpose of the sanctions imposed this weekend by the United Nations Security Council is clear—that punitive actions will be taken against North Korea and that the sale of weapons and arms technology will be banned.

As the sanctions are implemented, we continue in our advocacy for peace with justice around the world, believing that the resolution of the ongoing conflict in this region must be conducted through peaceful, lawful and just means. Crises like this in the Korean peninsula beg for the exhaustive use of multilateral mechanisms, especially through the United Nations and the six-party talks.

The humanitarian implications of sanctions must not be neglected because at the heart of this political and economic tool is a “fundamental ethical and moral dilemma: the impact of sanctions on the innocent” (2004 *Book of Resolutions*, #296). We pray that the sanctions will be complied with even as it should ensure that the North Korean people are not needlessly, and in a prolonged time, subjected to any further suffering than what they already go through daily.

We reaffirm the desire of the Korean people for reunification as the path to justice, peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula. This recent nuclear testing undermines the dream for reunification even as it imperils the desired atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among parties involved.

We call once more for a comprehensive peace settlement that includes the conclusion of a peace treaty that should finally end threats of war and establish an enduring peace that minimizes, if not eliminates, the tensions that daily visits the Korean peninsula.

We continue to urge the nations of the world to pursue peace and security arrangements based on mutual respect and accountability, and a reciprocal recognition of peaceful co-existence among nations.

The peace of Jesus Christ is a peace based on shalom. It is not simply the absence of war and suffering. It is the active presence of justice in human relations and in the affairs of nations and states. Peace that is founded on the balance of fear and intimidation is not peace. Peace cannot be secured by instruments of war. Peace comes from humbling ourselves before the Prince of Peace so that we can truly be exulted as God’s beloved.

Even as we urge North Korea to pursue peaceful means rather than take the nuclear path, we issue the same call for nations of the world to pursue disarmament. The moral high ground in securing the peace that passes all understanding arises from a platform of equal obligation—where everyone seriously pursues the path to nuclear non-proliferation. We therefore urge North Korea and all nuclear and non-nuclear nations of the world to abide by the principles of available nuclear non-proliferation regimes, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

(This resolution was jointly developed by the Advancing Korean American Ministries Task Force and the Peace with Justice/United Nations and International Affairs Work Area)