PRAYER FOR PEACE IN NORTHEAST ASIA

At the 7th China-Japan-Korea YMCAs Peace Forum held in Gwangju, Korea from 16th ~ 19th 2017, the three National Council of YMCAs have reviewed the “Prayer for Peace in Northeast Asia” jointly adopted at the fifth Peace Forum held in Hiroshima on 21 to 24 January 2014. The 6th Peace Forum in Nanjing in 2016 used the Prayers along with ringing the Peace Bell as a symbol of our commitment to peace. We re-affirm together the Prayer with some revisions reflecting the current situations in East Asia.

We will learn from history and link the historical lessons to our future. We will continue to promote youth participation in the future Peace Forum so that youths from three National YMCAs will continue to not only build their friendship and unity, but also identify their common tasks for peace building in the region in the future. As well, we will continue to spread the “Peace Bell” to our local YMCAs as a symbol of commitment towards peace-building. We will ring the bells simultaneously and pray for peace. Last but not the least, we decided to dedicate this “Prayer for Peace” to express our common wishes for peace and seek blessed strength from the Lord

Preamble

In modern history, Japan’s militarism led to the invasion of many countries in Asia and killed and harmed many people. In addition, it tore beloved families and friends apart and made them sad.
After the war, seeking to overcome this tragic history, the peoples of Japan and China as well as Korea became friends again as neighboring nations through a lot of effort of prayers and confessions, hoping for forgiveness and reconciliation. Moreover, the re-establishment of diplomatic relationships guaranteed freedom of interchange among the citizens of these three countries.

Unfortunately, these days relations between country to country have been tense because of disagreements over territory and disregard of historic lessons. Some politicians make speeches that prioritize their own national interests by looking down on the peoples of other countries without considering the pain of the people who were hurt during the war. To make matters worse, there have recently been mutually threatening statements between the related governments centering around the unhampered missile tests by the latter, leading to escalated tension with a possibility of nuclear war, not only in the Korean peninsula but also in East Asia and beyond.

There are people who try to solve problems over disputed territories through violence or force. We have learned from history that extreme nationalism and many conflicts over land and ideology have led the people to war.

In Hiroshima and Nagasaki turned the cities into ruins and exterminated the lives of thousands of human beings. Moreover, these weapons caused diseases and disabilities to the next generation. We swore that “we will never make these mistakes again” and have made this peaceful era sustained so far. However, history tells us when the pains of war are forgotten, people shall be at war again without realizing it. At the moment, more than 20,000 atomic bombs exist on earth, which are hundreds of times stronger than that of the bombs
released above Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If atomic bombs were used above 10 cities on earth, it is said that the human race would cease to exist because of the wave of radiation in the atmosphere that would be triggered.

Responding to the above issues, let us pray in the name of our Lord of Peace, Jesus Christ, for the sake of peace in Northeast Asia to enable the people of China, Japan and Korea, and others who live in Northeast Asia to respect each other and to solve problems through peaceful dialogue, not violence.

Let us pray that sisters and brothers in our YMCAs can love each other across our borders.

Prayers for Peace in Northeast Asia

“May tensions among nations ease and transform into wisdom of coexistence and keeping peace.”

Holy God, tensions among nations regarding the national ownership of land, the recognition of history and endless competition for military supremacy are now increasing in Northeast Asia. The history of humanity teaches us that peace is easily distracted and that territorial disputes can lead us to brutal conflicts and wars.

This friction has also created distrust and hatred that has spread in each nation instead of trust and amity. These nations’ economies that have grown based on mutual reliance and reciprocity have been crucially damaged and innocent
people’s lives have been threatened and even destroyed.

We follow the peace doctrine, World YMCA biblical verse “That they all may be one” (John 17:21) by redemption of the cross of our Lord Jesus, and thus, we have been exchanging youth and building mutual trust and friendship beyond our borders for unity in diversity.

Let the leaders and peoples of each nation remember our friendship that has been nurtured and let them foster mind and wisdom to solve our problems over territory as well as the imminent crisis over the military supremacy competition through peaceful dialogue, not by force. Please make us an instrument of your peace, so that we are united in your mission to take a collective action for peace building in the region.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Peace. Amen.

December 18th, 2017

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