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## A Message From Bishop Jung

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### Peace in Our Time? Celebrating Korea's Progress



*"By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things."*

*Galatians 5:22-23*

God's Spirit is truly at work in our world, even in those places where we sometimes give up hope, despair of progress, and doubt lasting change. But the fruit of God's Spirit is not solely dependent on our ability to keep faith. Often, we can simply sit back and marvel that miraculous things are happening, which then can

inspire us to renewed belief. I am so inspired by what is continuing to happen between North and South Korea.

On the second day of a three-day summit between Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong Un, the leaders of the two Koreas made bold declarations that Pyongyang was on its way to denuclearization. It is easy to dismiss this as simple diplomacy, but many Koreans doubted that such a day and such declarations could ever happen. Even statements of intention to move toward peace, restoration, and reunification are nothing short of miraculous in the minds of a great number of people. It is of great significance that this is the third summit between Korean leadership. This lays a critical foundation for U.S. involvement and the relationship that President Trump builds and maintains with North Korea.

Beyond military de-escalation, talks included a commitment "to search for the remains of troops killed but unaccounted for during the Korean War and pull back their guard posts within the DMZ on a trial basis," (according to one government official). Talk has occurred to transform the DMZ into a "peace zone."

"After having lived together for 5,000 years, our Korean nation had been separated for 70 years. Today at this place I propose to completely end 70 years of animosity and take a big step forward to once again become one and unify," said President Moon Jae-In, in a speech in front of 150,000 citizens of North Korea. I encourage us all to celebrate BIG STEPS wherever and whenever they occur. What is now happening in Korea is not just about Korea: it affects global community and diplomacy, and it involves a healthy and supportive relationship with the United States and other world powers.

It is too simple to view all of this as political, social, military, and economic without comprehending the spiritual dimensions as well. This is a healing of a nation, of families, of communities, of race and ethnicity, of a people. Korea has been divided in many physical, emotional, ethical, and metaphysical ways for seven decades. While a reconciliation of religion may not be in the offing, a reconciliation grounded in "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control," seems possible for the first time in years.

I want to call upon The United Methodist Church to engage in a witness of prayer for global peace, exemplified by what is happening on the Korean peninsula. For Korea, I ask that we pray for peace, but also for a creative and generative vision for a unified and vital future. By God's grace, may families, friends, traditions, and heritages be reconciled and healed. At this point, a great deal of power is in President Trump's hands as the United States continues to negotiate with the Koreans — to provide a way forward as these leaders meet at the UN assembly next week and beyond. I pray that this movement takes us through an Armistice Treaty to a true, lasting peace treaty in the very near future. This is a holy time, and a time to rejoice and be glad. For our God is an awesome and miraculous God who can move us beyond our most devastating differences to a new and glorious unity and promise.

Hee Soo Jung, Bishop