

A Report on the Christian Forum of Peace and Reconciliation in the Context of Northeast Asia

April 21-25.2014 Korea

By

The Editorial Committee of

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Duke Divinity School Center for Reconciliation invited 44 scholars, church and civil organizations leaders from South Korea, Japan, China, USA, Hong Kong and Finland to hold a Christian Forum of Reconciliation in Northeast Asia in Pilgrim House, 58-3, Dodee-ri, Buk-myeon, Gapyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do, Korea 477-841 in April 21-25, 2014.

The forum had for goals as follows: 1) To create fresh space of community and learning which will strengthen Christian leadership for God' s ministry of reconciliation in Northeast Asia. 2) To build relationship and learn together within a framework that is theological, contextual, practical, including worship, Scriptural reflection, and eating together. 3) To engage key themes of the missional and contextual challenge in the region related to the ministry of peace and reconciliation. 4) To create a catalytic space for long-term partnership, common mission, and deeper collaboration between Christian leaders, ministries, and institutions.

In the opening ceremony on the first day, the Korea Catholic Bishop Kang gave a speech on the issues, which need to be reconciled in Northeast Asia. There were altogether four daily themes: 1) After sharing our stories of pain and hope, the second day' s theme was: Reconciliation toward what? God' s gift of New Creation. Japanese senior pastor Hiroo Sekita gave a presentation on repent and apology as a Japanese Christian, Church formation in the southern part of Kawasaki, Sakuramoto and Tode. 2) The theme for the third day was: Where are we and what is going on? God' s gift Lament. Assistant professor Yuko Fukushima presented on the topic Gift of lament in the Scriptures (Jer. 11:17; Lam. 1:5; 2:4, 11, 17; 3:1-3, 7-8, 19-24; 4:10. Judges 11:1-11, etc.). 3) The theme for the fourth day was: What does hope look like? God' s gift of stories, models and signs. Professor Lung-Kwong Lo, from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, gave a presentation with the topic "What does hope look like? ---- A Biblical vision of Hope in Romans" , by concentrating on Rom. 5:1-5 to discuss about justification, reconciliation and Hope, by concentrating on Rom. 4:16-18 to discuss about the story of Abraham as the father of both Jews and Gentiles (many nations), and by concentrating on Rom. 8:14-28 to discuss about hope for the future glory of the children of God. 4) The theme for the last day was: How does God sustain the ministry of reconciliation over the long haul? God' s gift of a Christ-centered spirituality. Dr. Hae-young Choi from the Catholic University of Korea gave a presentation with the title above. President Obama was visiting Japan and probably was going to say something, which might have made the Northeast situation worse.

There also were three kinds of group discussions.

First was story sharing on pain and hope, in addition to individual pains and hopes. The hatred

among Japan, Korea and China, the conflict between South and North Korea, the negative influence of Fukushima nuclear accident, and the conflict between ethnic groups in China, etc., were also much discussed.

Second was the country group discussions, and each group reported top three challenges and top three hopes.

Dr. Paulos Huang reported on behalf of the China group as follows: Challenge 1 is within church: the conflict between house and TSPM church, the quality of pastors and church leaders, the low level education of theology. Challenge 2 is within society: Political theological issues between Christianity and Chinese rulers, cultural theological issues between Christianity and Chinese identities (Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, etc), Pragmatic problems between Christianity and Chinese commercial, secular and folk religious context, and balance of religious policies in China. Challenge 3 is concerning the influence of China's growth in the global international context, especially the conflict of values between China and the other part of the world. Sign 1 of hope is in developing theological education. Sign 2 is to reconstruct the old church and to help the new church and generation to emerge. And sign 3 is to reflect the essence of Christianity so as to help Christianity survive and develop in the context of China.

Dr. Catherine Kwong, from the Urban Peacemaker Evangelical Fellowship of Hong Kong, reported on behalf of the Hong Kong group as follows: Challenge 1 is the mistrust between Hong Kong people and Beijing government. Challenge 2 is the gap between profits and classes in Hong Kong. Challenge 3 is social issues such as the occupying challenges by mainland Chinese tourists and immigrants to Hong Kong. Sign 1 of hope is genuine dialogue. Sign 2 is mutual relationship. Sign 3 is in new generation of church.

Dr. Yuko Fukushima reported on behalf of the Japan group as follows: The main challenge is that people have not been treated humanly in the Japanese social structure. Sign of hope is to look for a humanly dialogue and to unite church and people.

The first South Korea group reported three challenges: 1) After rapid economic growth, people suffer more and more. 2) Competition in the context of secularism and capitalism. 3) Militarist culture. Three signs of hope are: 1) God works through Holy Spirit. 2) New community movement, faith/discipleship training. 3) Realization of problems which people are confronting.

The second South Korea group reported challenges such as: 1) The horrible influence of Government's spies. 2) Government's inconsistent policies on the reconciliation between South and North Korea. 3) Rumors confuse people to doubt the government's military situation. Signs of hope are in the difference between three generations.

The USA group reported as follows: Challenge 1 is the role of USA in the conflicts on Northeast Asia between democracy and communism, and in demonization of calling North Korea as evil. etc.. 2) American Christians are highly influenced by USA government and mass-media. 3) Decline and growth of different denominations of church, and Pentecost is one of the main phenomena. Sign 1 of hope is in 20 years, USA will become more multi-racial and global multi-national interests will be emphasized. Sign 2 of hope is that the new generation is concentrating more and more on issues such as world future, community and social responsibilities. Sign 3 of hope is that more and more second generation of immigrants in USA start to believe in Jesus Christ.

Third was issue Group discussions: 1) Christian vision and mission for peace, reconciliation and

unification of Korea. 2) Developing the next generation of Christian leaders for peace and reconciliation. 3) Creation and Human Technology: A Christian approach. 4) Christian response to territorial disputes. 5) Developing a theology of reconciliation and peace for the Northeast Asia Context. 6) 21st Century Christianity and Nationalism: What is required from Christian theology and Witness?

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