

Declaration Regarding the Renunciation of Claims to Former United Church of Canada Mission Property in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

The United Church of Canada expresses its support for, and solidarity with, The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) in its peace-making efforts in Korea, and joins in partnership with the PROK to urge “the people of South and North Korea to overcome the division of hatred and confrontation and move toward reconciliation and reunification.”

The United Church of Canada knows from its own commitment of working towards right relations with Indigenous Peoples in Canada that the work of reconciliation is not an easy or straightforward process. It requires patience, listening, and trust-building, and an acknowledgement of our own complicity in structures of oppression.

As difficult as this work may be, it is the ministry to which God has called us as Christians. Paul reminds the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 5:18–19, just as God, through Christ, “was reconciling the world to Godself,” so too we, as Christ-followers, have been invited to participate in this “ministry of reconciliation” in our own time, joining with others in participating with God in mending and healing of creation. Some 50 years ago, The United Church of Canada’s understanding of mutuality in mission led to the handing over of all mission properties to the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. The United Church of Canada now formally renounces all intention of retaining claims of ownership of property in what is now North Korea and joins with partners in the ministry of reconciliation in Korea. The United Church of Canada undertakes this action in the faith that this symbolic gesture expresses solidarity with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and supports its efforts to shift the narrative in Korea from hostility and conflict to peacemaking and reconciliation. We unite with Korean partners and all who seek justice and peace in the Korean Peninsula:

“ . . . in turning toward the path of reconciliation and cooperation, so that Koreans of both South and North Korea can rejoice and laugh together in new and creative ways.”