

2023 New Year Honam Jeju District Interfaith Prayer for Peace in Korea

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On January 31st, the "2023 New Year Honam Jeju District Interfaith Prayer for Peace on the Korean Peninsula and the Realization of a Heavenly Unified Korea" was held at the Grand Ballroom of the Ocean Hotel in Yeosu.

The event was organized by the Korean Religious Association and hosted by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) of Honam Jeju District. Over 80 religious leaders from various denominations and faiths gathered to pray for peace on the Korean Peninsula amidst growing conflicts and global economic struggles.

Pastor Bang Joong-geun, Chairman of KCLC Honam Jeju Province, said in his prayer, "Let us, as religious individuals, unite across denominations to fulfill God's will and achieve the unification of our country and world peace. Let us come together in 2023 to make great contributions for the benefit of our nation and the world."

UPF Honam Jeju Vice President Cho Yukhyun welcomed everyone and emphasized the importance of coming together as one. He said, "I believe that today's gathering is the largest and most inclusive gathering of all clergy. If we truly love all people, we will have no enemies. Let us work together in 2023 to build a house of love and when we meet again, we can reflect on our journey."

Father Heo Jong-hyun, co-president of IAPD Honam Jeju, spoke about the role of religion in society and said, "Religious values such as humanity, righteousness, justice, and peace are being overshadowed by economic logic. Religion has become, at best, a means to an end. It's essential for religious leaders to reflect on their responsibilities in society, our country, and the world."

Monk Zahuang, co-chairman of IAPD Honam Jeju, discussed the importance of respect and recognition of all religions. He said, "By learning and understanding the meaning and significance of different religious ceremonies and teachings, we can come to know that they are all various expressions of one

God. Through prayer and devotion, we can achieve religious peace and unity, peace on the Korean Peninsula, and peace in the world."



(From the left top) Pastor Bang Joong-geun, Vice Chairman Cho Yukhyun, Father Heo Jong-hyun, Monk Zahuang, Chairman Lee Sang-Jae, and pre-ceremony performances.

In his New Year's address, President Lee Sang-Jae emphasized the mission of religion to restore God's lost love and the significance of creating a heavenly unified Korea. He said, "It is important to remove the 38th parallel and create a heavenly unified Korea so 80 million people will not have to shed their blood. Let us, as religious individuals, unite to make peace and spread love, realizing a Heavenly Unified Korea. Let 2023 be a year of peace and love for all."

The religious leaders shared New Year's greetings, expressed their willingness to work together for peace, and made resolutions for unity across denominations and faiths as well as their desire to work for peace on the Korean Peninsula and realize a heavenly unified Korea.