

IAPD Forum: Toward Reunification on the Korean Peninsula

Tomiko Duggan
March 14, 2021

“Toward Reunification on the Korean Peninsula: The Role of Faith and Civic Leadership”

2020 marked 70 years since the outbreak of the Korean War, and the peoples of North and South Korea remain divided at the 38 parallel.

The IAPD Peace Forum invites you to hear North Korean defectors' testimonies and reports on the current conditions of life and human rights in North Korea.

IAPD presents concerned faith and civic leaders sharing their insights and understanding of steps that can be taken to achieving real peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Program Speakers:



**Archbishop
George A.
Stallings, Jr.**
Founder, Imani
Temple African
American Catholic
Congregation,
National Chairman,
IAPD



Dr. Ki Hoon Kim
Chairman, the
Promotional
Committee for the
World Christian
Leadership Conference
WCLC



**Dr. Suzanne K.
Scholte**
President, Defense
Forum Foundation



Program Moderator:
Dr. Michael Jenkins
President, UPF
International
Chairman, UPF-North
America

The Third Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) Peace Forum took place virtually on March 9, 2021, under the theme of *“Towards the Unification of the Korean Peninsula: The Role of Faith and Civic Leadership.”*

The webinar was specifically designed for faith leaders, experts, and concerned civic leaders to address issues of peace in the Korean Peninsula and offer their understanding and wisdom regarding steps toward the unification of the peninsula.

Tomiko Duggan, the IAPD Program Director, and Senior Vice President of the Universal Peace Federation-USA welcomed the audience with over 600 guests on Zoom and Facebook.

Tomiko Duggan reported that the 70-year division of the Korean Peninsula caused the undisclosed suffering of many people. She confessed, *“As far back as late 1970, I was involved with a project supporting the repatriation of Japanese wives and children who followed their husbands and fathers and emigrated to North Korea. These families were deceived by the false propaganda and promise in the 1960s about life in North Korea and then found themselves unable to re-visit Japan – even if it were only to see aging parents and relatives before they died. I read the government censored and redacted the letters from these captives Japanese pleading for release. My colleagues and I fasted and demonstrated in front of the UN building to publicize the circumstances of their lives and the false claims of the North Korean government about them.”*

Dr. Michael Jenkins, President of UPF International and Chairman of the UPF – North America was the Program Moderator. The speakers today are uniquely informed about life in North Korea.

DR. JENKINS: introduces Archbishop George A. Stallings, Jr., the Founder of the Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation and Chairman of the IAPD

ARCH. STALLINGS: Believing in the interconnectedness of all humankind, and the spirituality of each person on the earth in a universal family, I know that what happens on the Korean peninsula affects all of us who do not live on the Korean peninsula. For the past 20 years, I've been associated through UPF with faith leaders around the world who have been concerned with reunification of the Koreas, visiting Korea multiple times a year. We went to the DMZ a number of times and we could feel strongly how many families are still suffering by separation from their relatives.

As a man of faith, I know the only source of assistance I can provide is what we call "soft diplomacy." How do we keep it on the front burner of American foreign policy? Through prayer and educating our congregations. Most Americans have no awareness of the situation.

I believe with God all things are possible. I know the door is open because of Father and Mother Moon's involvement.

DR. KIM: Two things are blocking the reunification of the Korean peninsula. First, the very extreme difference in ideology of North and South Korea, communism and democracy. A wide and deep division. Kim Il-sung upheld juche ideology based on Marxism. More than 10 million people escaped from the North to the South between 1945-1950. My family is one of them, but we are missing most of them.

Juche ideology could not offer a happy life to the Korean people. When Father and Mother Moon visited North Korea, they explained Godism ideology to Kim Il-sung.

Not only conflict between North and South, but another big matter is also against one another in the South. Religious, social, political leaders have said, we must drop the bomb on Pyongyang. Fighting not only against North and South, but against each other, South to South.

So what do we need? A new vision, new ideology is necessary, a core principle of peace must be interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universally shared values. Without a new vision, very hard to bring reunification.

As religious people, we must practice God-centered true love. Pope Francis just visited Iraq, the first time in 2,000 years for a Pope. This is a great example of practicing God's love. Without practicing forgiveness, we cannot come together to build a faith community, nation, world.

Mother Moon has visited Muslim countries in Africa, telling them, you are my family. As religious leaders, we must practice God-centered love.

Two videos were shown of testimonies by North Korean defectors.

Ms. Suzanne K. Scholte, President, Defense Forum Foundation, Chair, North Korea Freedom Coalition spoke:

MS. SCHOLTE: Just quickly, the current situation: over 33,000 North Koreans have escaped to the South since the outbreak of Covid. There are thousands more in Canada, UK, US. There is now no doubt that the Kim Jong-Eun regime is committing atrocities that have no parallel in history. It's important to say this because in the 1990s the first defectors I hosted in the US had stories so horrible that people didn't believe them. The UN Commission of Inquiry concluded this in 2014.

North Korea experience Covid first outside of China, and shut their border in January 2020. We do know the regime has a great fear of Covid; a shoot-to-kill order was instituted at the border. They seem to have kept the elite safe – at the Party Congress no one was wearing masks.

This is a historic opportunity because North Korea has refused to accept back escapees who are being detained in China right now. They are people who had the resources to get out. This means they are either elites, or they have family members in the South who raised funds to get them out. Detainees who are sent back to the North are tortured and imprisoned, sometimes executed. Escaping to the South is punishable by death.

This is an opportunity for South Korea to quietly work with China to safely resettle those defectors who are in detention.

The situation in the South now is very disturbing; there is great division in how to deal with North Korea. Moon Jae-in, instead of speaking out for the human rights of the Korean people, is working on behalf of the Kim dictatorship through his actions. His party pushed through legislation banning getting information into North Korea. Kim's sister demanded that sending information by balloon must stop.

Here's a technique defectors came up with to get information into North Korea – filling bottles that would float upon the shore of North Hwanghae province. Also sending balloons with masks, flash drives with information, leaflets. All this has been banned by the current South Korean government.

Ways to we help North Koreans:

1. Information is very important. Free North Korea radio broadcasts every morning and evening, funded by escapees and the Korean diaspora. Getting information to North Korea shows them we care about them, which contrasts the regime message that Americans want to blow them up. Music can be very powerful, glorifying God.
2. The power of prayer – this is a spiritual battle with a demonic regime.
3. Appealing with us to get the currently detained refugees out of China.
4. Pressure the Moon government to advocate for the human rights of the North Korean people, not shut down their voices. A defector told me that the situation now in South Korea for defectors is currently worse than it is in North Korea.
5. Support one of the many North Korean defector groups. Support Free North Korea Radio, for instance.

In conclusion, I believe we can bring peaceful regime change by giving the elites hope for an alternative to their current limited options, which are devotion to Kim Jong-Eun, or imprisonment/execution. We know there are people in the regime that want to get out but they need someone to partner with.

To watch the recording of the forum, please click [here](#)