

Faith leaders join call of peace treaty to end Korean War

by [Thomas E. Kim](#)

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Christine Ahn, executive director of Women Cross DMZ, speaks at a Korean peace conference in Washington, DC, on July 27. (Photo by Thomas E. Kim, United Methodist News)

On July 27, the 70th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement of the Korean War, known as the “Forgotten War,” hundreds of Korean peace advocates from across the country and South Korea gathered in Washington, DC, for [Korea Peace Action](#).

It was part of a three-day convening called National Mobilization to End the Korean War, which was held July 26-28 and organized by a broad coalition of peace advocates and various faith traditions.

One of the primary goals of the convening is to mobilize support for the Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act ([H.R. 1369](#)), which calls for a peace agreement with North Korea. Christians worldwide have called for an end-of-war agreement and a peace treaty.

Christine Ahn, executive director of [Women Cross DMZ](#) and one of the event organizers, said the purpose of the event was to gather and know that the Korean peace movement is unstoppable.

“We’re multigenerational, multinational,” she said. “We represent families. Divided families, militar, and nuclear scientists are here. It is the power of the people and we will end this war.”

Hundreds of people joined a rally held at Lafayette Square in front of the White House, followed by a march and an interfaith vigil at the Lincoln Memorial on the afternoon and evening of the July 27 anniversary of the armistice.

At the rally, Wehyun Chang, the chair of the Peace Committee of the Korean Association of the United Methodist Church, shared his own family’s suffering from the separation of Koreans.

They were preparing to leave North Korea in January 1951, but because of severe winter weather conditions that year, his father’s younger sister had to remain behind. His father promised her that he'd be back in three or four months, but upon his death 57 years later in 2007, he had never been able to return.

“Can you imagine being separated from family for, let’s say, seven months? Would you be OK with that? Seventy years? President Biden, please end the war and bring me and millions of families to see our own loved ones. That's the only humane thing to do,” he said.

Chang also called to remember over 36,000 American soldiers who died during the Korean War, adding, “I don't think a single of them sacrificed their lives thinking that this war lasts for 70 years.”

During the interfaith vigil at the Lincoln Memorial, Charles Ryu, lead pastor at Morningside United Methodist Church in New York, led a prayer of confession.

“We sinned by allowing our nation to collectively forget this war, though it is yet unended,” he said. “We sinned by breaking our promises in agreements with the (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). We sin by profiting from the militarization of Korea, earning money from weapons sales through our stocks, bonds and retirement portfolios. We sin in our indifference to the suffering and humanity of the Korean people.”

The final day of the event was a conference held at George Washington University. The keynote address was given by eminent Korea historian Bruce Cummings who highlighted the fact that war in Korea is still a real possibility, adding that “this is a catastrophic policy failure.”

“North Korea is the most sanctioned country in the world, and it is threatening nuclear war, and Americans don't want that, and Koreans don't want that either,” Ahn said. “So it's time for a new approach, and we are calling for a peace-first approach, not peace at the end of North Korea giving up its nuclear weapons because that won't happen.”

She added that peace is the foundation from which many good things can spring, such as improved humanitarian conditions for North Korean people, improved human rights, and removing the threat of nuclear war.

Doug Asbury, a retired Methodist pastor from Illinois and a member of Korea Peace Now!, explained why the peace treaty is needed from a Christian perspective.

“We want to be faithful to Jesus Christ, who would walk across the DMZ at the risk of his own life to bring healing to North Koreans, and would sacrifice his life. He did sacrifice his life so that we would devote ourselves to him and his purpose in the world,” he said.

“So, when are we going to be true Christians and follow Jesus rather than the forces of war in this world?” —United Methodist News Service