

## Joint Statement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Minority Issues and Mission

*Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.* (Matthew 25:40)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Minority Issues and Mission was held in Tokyo, Japan from November 18 to 21, 2015 at the Korean YMCA in Japan. Under the theme, “Together toward a just and inclusive society in Japan -- Justice and inclusivity in Japan, in partnership with all of Japan and the world,” 133 people consisting of minorities such as Koreans in Japan, immigrants, Ainu, Okinawans, discriminated Buraku, and LGBT persons, as well as representatives of the World Council of Churches, and churches in South Africa, USA, Canada, Germany, Australia, India, Taiwan and Korea. Aboriginal people of Taiwan and Dalits from India also participated. In the main Conference we shared with each other about the present situation and challenges of hate speech in Japan, and also the global challenges posed by xenophobia and hate crime, and held discussions with the aim to realize a just and inclusive, multi-national/ethnic, multi-cultural society.

In Japanese society until now, violence that is rooted in discrimination against Koreans in Japan and other minorities has been repeated, such as in the case of a physical assault upon a Korean school girl in uniform. And yet, furthermore, today hate speech that incites racial hatred and ethnic discrimination against Koreans in Japan and other minorities is being made in public places by organizations, which causes fear and pain by using discriminatory and exclusionary slogans, like “maggot,” “cockroach,” “subhuman,” “die,” or “kill.” In spite of the fact that these words and actions advocate direct harm toward the lives, spirit and bodies of minorities, including even children, and dehumanize those who are targeted, there still exists in the state and society of Japan no legal system to prohibit racial discrimination and violence that is based on it, and acts of discrimination have been allowed to continue unchecked. Past cases around the world show that when hate speech is left unchecked, this will lead, in the future to crimes that are accompanied by more serious violence.

It is clear that historical revisionism that tries to obliterate historical awareness of Japan’s colonial rule, war, and war responsibility, and of its victimizing past of violations against human dignity, serves to legitimize hate speech. In order to root out hate speech and build a society in which human dignity and equality are realized, it is imperative that the state and society of Japan examine historical facts again, and establish a legal framework for the protection of human rights, beginning with a law to prohibit racial discrimination.

In spite of this, in the face of accusations made by victims from the Asia-Pacific war, historical facts are distorted and manipulated in Japan to deny the facts of war-time victimization, and historical revisionism that justifies these distortions runs rampant. Furthermore, many national legislators including

Prime Minister Abe have joined this, thus placing historical revisionism at the state's core. We have confirmed that state-led historical revisionism encourages discrimination and exclusionism and fuels the birth of hate speech and hate crimes, and furthermore leads to militarization and the promotion of war.

In today's world, the gap between the rich and the poor, transcending national and ethnic boundaries, is growing rapidly. Uncertainty about the future and economic and social contradictions cause intolerance, and events in which minority immigrants are targeted by outbursts of hate and fear are becoming frequent. This problem of xenophobia is making it difficult in many countries to engage in humanitarian emergency acceptance of refugees. Under the current system of conditional and selective, hierarchic immigration, immigrants will be no more than objects of assimilation. But, it is through our concrete encounters with immigrants that we are made to realize that immigrants are neighbors who possess "dignity of life." It is through this process that we are able to break our inner chain of enmity.

In this Conference we confirmed that the Christian Church must seek both the path of peace that clearly opposes the path toward armament and war, and the path toward construction of an inclusive society in which peace and welfare are shared with all people, and that for this we must hear the call of Jesus Christ in the cries of minorities. The Church must answer the call of Christ and spread the overtent of inclusivity in a global network, and for this purpose must share this problem as an important challenge of theology, mission and church formation.

Today, in this world of growing intolerance, segmentation of society is proceeding by the abandonment of the weak. Thereby the lives and dignity of many people are being seriously injured through the rise of hate and conflict. As Christians, we are filled with a strong sense of crisis at these things.

Today, amid rapid advances in the globalization of information and wealth, many societies are in crisis and at risk of devastation by hate-filled violence. In this world where a storm of racism and xenophobia spreads together with globalization, today's Christian Church must search for a mission path that resists hate and spreads the tent of inclusivity in order to restore the whole of humanity in God's image. We are able to know from the Bible that God showed us the way to break the chain of hate and lead us toward reconciliation, through the presence of sojourners (foreigners and immigrants). To welcome sojourners, or to place one-self in the position of a stranger, is necessary in order to have fear and anger changed into the hope for inclusivity, and for God's blessing to be realized in this world. The Christian Church must profess to today's society that the love of neighbor, shown to us by Jesus Christ, is the true power that overcomes human enmity and hate. The Churches of Japan confess that we stood aside and watched as minorities suffered under the violence of hate speech. We resolve to engage these issues and seek the realization of peace and inclusive societies on this earth, by accepting this as the call of Gospel mission entrusted to us as Christians living in this time.

We, who have attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Minority Issues and Mission, propose the following to the government of Japan, to Japanese society, to the churches of Japan and to the churches of the world:

- 1 To the government of Japan we demand that it act now, as a member of the world and of Asia, to address the following matters.
  - 1.1 In order to eliminate racial discrimination, follow the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination, and act quickly to institute domestic laws such as the “Basic Law for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,” “Basic Law for Foreign Residents,” or a law of equal effect, which will outlaw hate speech and other forms of discrimination.
  - 1.2 In order to continue peaceful dialogue with neighboring nations, thoroughly inculcate a fair-minded historical awareness that is clearly conscious of war responsibilities and reflect this in school education.
  - 1.3 In order to eliminate prejudice and discrimination toward minorities, guarantee the right of education to minorities, beginning with the (equitable) provision of no-cost education for Korean high schools, and systematize multicultural education.
- 2 We call out to citizens of Japan to do the following:
  - 2.1 In order to realize the vision of an inclusive multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society that does not permit hate speech, listen to and respond to the voices of minorities and work toward social, political, economic and cultural participation by minorities.
- 3 In order to bear the work of Gospel mission entrusted to the church, we call upon the churches of Japan to do the following.
  - 3.1 Hear, recognize and share the pains that are experienced by people who are marginalized and excluded, for these point toward injustices in Japanese society.
  - 3.2 Make it a mission strategy in each denomination to pay attention to the needs and concerns of minorities, to provide periodic opportunities for ecumenical discussion of these issues and to create opportunities for collaborative action.
  - 3.3 Cooperate in the building of a domestic minority network and continue discussion, within and among, the various denominations toward establishment of a “Minority Mission Center”, which the KCCJ is calling for.
  - 3.4 With people of other faiths and civil society groups within Japan, engage in collaborative work to address discrimination toward minorities.

- 4 In order to spread the tent of inclusivity to the world, we call upon churches of the world to do the following.
  - 4.1 Utilize world-wide networks to facilitate the sharing of stories of churches that are overcoming discrimination toward minorities, or building inclusive community, and share effective practices for these purposes.
  - 4.2 Actively support youth programs that engage with the various issues associated with minorities.
  - 4.3 Call on global ecumenical bodies for a renewed re-commitment to resist the revival of racism in many parts of the world, and act to affirm the life and dignity of marginalized people.
  - 4.4 On March 21, the UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, pray for the minorities of the world.

November 21, 2015

Participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Minority Issues and Mission

Korean Christian Church in Japan / National Christian Council in Japan / United Church of Christ in Japan / The Church of Christ in Japan / Japan Baptist Convention / Japan Baptist Union / Catholic Commission of Japan for Refugees, Migrants and People on the Move / Wesley Foundation / World Council of Churches / World Communion of Reformed Churches / Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan / United Church of Christ / Presbyterian Church in Taiwan / The Syrian Orthodox Church / The United Church of Canada / Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) / The Presbyterian Church in Canada / Evangelical Mission in Solidarity / Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany / United Methodist Church / Uniting Church in Australia / Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa / African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church / Korean Methodist Church / Presbyterian Church of Korea / Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea / Korea Evangelical Holiness Church / National Council of Churches in Korea / Korea Church Women United / Anglican Church of Korea