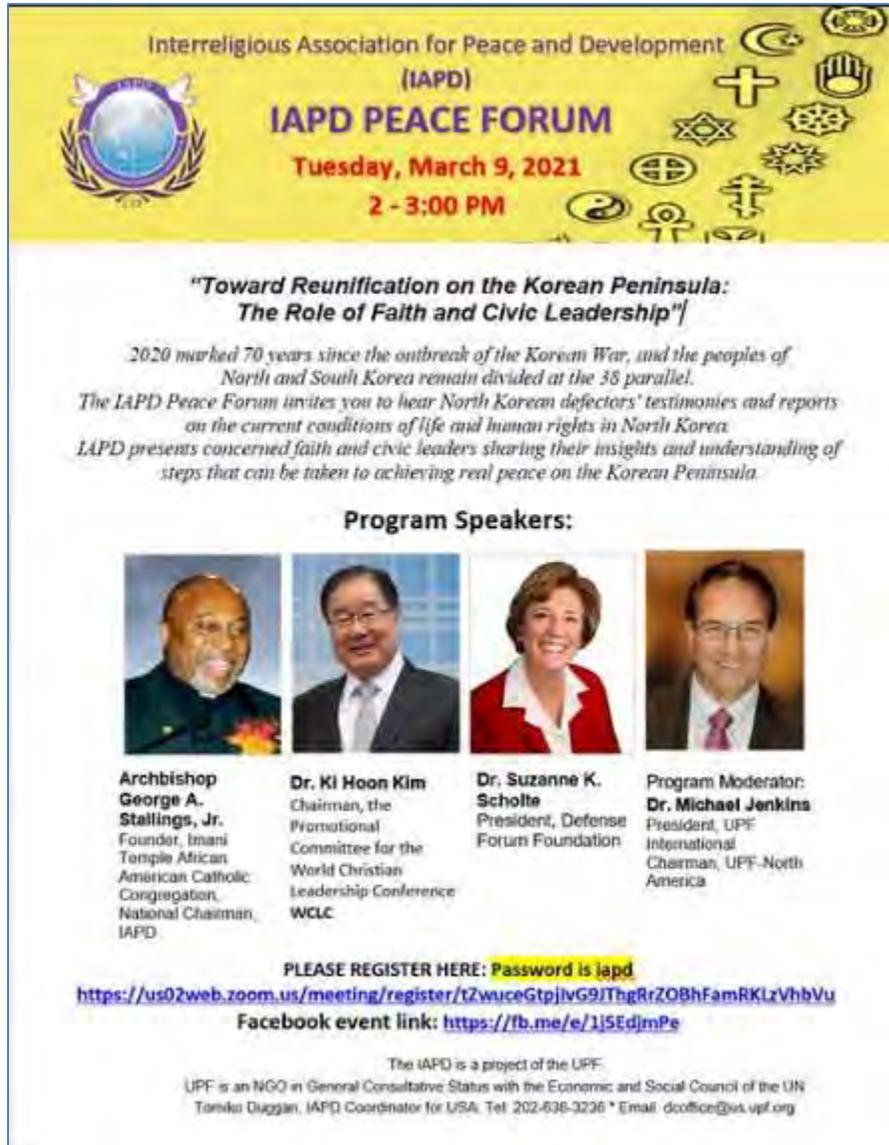


IAPD: Towards the Unification of the Korean Peninsula: The Role of Faith

Michael Jenkins
March 9, 2021



The poster for the IAPD Peace Forum features a yellow header with the IAPD logo on the left and various religious symbols (cross, crescent, yin-yang, etc.) on the right. The text in the header reads: "Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) IAPD PEACE FORUM Tuesday, March 9, 2021 2 - 3:00 PM". Below the header, the title of the forum is "Toward Reunification on the Korean Peninsula: The Role of Faith and Civic Leadership". A paragraph of text states: "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." Below this is a section titled "Program Speakers:" with four portraits and their names and titles: 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); and Program Moderator Dr. Michael Jenkins (President, UPF International Chairman, UPF-North America). At the bottom, registration information is provided: "PLEASE REGISTER HERE: Password is iapd" followed by a Zoom link and a Facebook event link. A footer note states: "The IAPD is a project of the UPF. UPF is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN. Tomiko Duggan, IAPD Coordinator for USA. Tel: 202-636-3226 * Email: dcoffice@upf.org".

United States -- The Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) help a Peace Forum virtually on March 9, 2021, under the theme "Towards the Unification of the Korean Peninsula: The Role of Faith and Civic Leadership."

This IAPD webinar specifically invited 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 Korean Peninsula.

Tomiko Duggan, IAPD program director and senior vice president of UPF-USA, welcomed the audience of over 600 guests on Zoom and Facebook.

Mrs. Duggan reminded participants that the 70-year division of the

Korean Peninsula caused incalculable suffering of many people:

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 to North Korea. These families were deceived by the false propaganda and promises in the 1960s about life in North Korea and then found themselves unable to re-visit Japan -- even if only to see aging parents and relatives before they died. The government censored and redacted the letters from these Japanese captives 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, Chairman of UPF-North America, and the Program Moderator, introduced Archbishop George A. Stallings, Jr., founder of the Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation and IAPD chairman, who said:

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 because of 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. Ki Hoon Kim, representing the World Christian Leadership Conference, offered the following observation:

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 the Godism ideology to Kim Il-sung.

Not only is there conflict between North and South; another conflict is one against another in the South. Religious, social, and political leaders have said, "We must drop the bomb on Pyongyang."

So what do we need? A new vision, a new ideology is necessary. A core principle of peace must be interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values. Without a new vision, it would be 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, or world.

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

Ms. Suzanne K. Scholte, president, Defense Forum Foundation; chair, North Korea Freedom Coalition, summarized the current situation:

Over 33,000 North Koreans have escaped to the South since the outbreak of Covid. There are

thousands more in Canada, the UK, and the United States. 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 United States had stories so horrible that people didn't believe them. The UN Commission of Inquiry concluded this in 2014.

North Korea shut its border in January 2020. We do know the regime has 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 an 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 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.

Defectors came up with some techniques to get information into North Korea -- filling bottles that would float. Also sending balloons with masks, flash drives with information, leaflets. All this has been banned by the current South Korean government.

How can we help?

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 with the regime's message that Americans want to blow them up. Music can be very powerful, glorifying God.

The power of prayer -- this is a spiritual battle with a demonic regime.

Appealing with us to get the currently detained refugees out of China.

Pressure the Moon government to advocate for 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.

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.