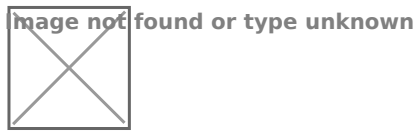


# 11th Korea-Japan NCC Bilateral Consultation



From June 11 (Wednesday) to 13 (Friday), the 11th bilateral NCC consultation between Korea and Japan, hosted by the National Council of Churches of Korea(NCCK)and the National Council of Churches of Japan (NCCJ), was held at the at NCCK headquarters under the theme “The Role of the Church as an Apostle of Peace and Reconciliation.”

His Eminence Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea and Exarch of Japan, President of the NCCK, delivered a welcome address at the opening ceremony, and the Priest of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, Fr. Jeremiah Kyung-Jin Cho, a member of the NCCK’s International Cooperation and Mission Commission, participated in various discussions and meetings.

Address at the 11th Korea-Japan NCC Bilateral Consultation

(Seoul, June 11-13, 2025)

Communication between Korean and Japanese Christians is in itself of great symbolic as well as substantial importance, especially this year as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Korea-Japan agreement.

After all, we must never forget that the love and unity of Christians is their distinctive characteristic; it is their identity. The Lord told us: “So will all men distinguish you that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35).

The brotherly relationship of Christians to one another is the strongest proclamation of the unity of men and peoples.

We are aware of the tremendous influence of the example of the early Christians on their pagan countrymen, which caused them to say, “Look how Christians love one another. They love each other before they even know each other!”

I am trying by this to emphasize our role as Christians, living in two neighboring countries, where historical reasons and circumstances have often brought us into conflict and hostility. Our role can be important in the societies in which we live if

we Christians living in Korea and Japan cultivate the love and peace of Christ among us.

With fervent love, we will become “the little leaven that leavens the whole lump of dough” (Galatians 5:9), and with steadfast faith, we will face any difficulty that arises in our relationships. Anyone who does not believe this/ and thinks that we cannot influence things because we are few and weak should re-read the Acts of the Apostles and other writings of the early Church to see what the illiterate and weak fishermen of Galilee, and subsequent generations of Christians, accomplished.

The weak defeated the strong and powerful of their time. Through their faith in the almighty Christ, they “subdued kingdoms, enforced justice, achieved the fulfillment of God’s promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped slaughter, went from being weak to strong, became heroes in war, and drove enemy armies to flight” (Heb. 11: 33-34).

They enriched the societies in which they lived and changed the ancient world not by a secular revolution, but by a “revolution of the heart”. Every Christian started the revolution from within himself. He struggled first to change himself inwardly and then to change and transform society by bearing witness with his life to love, reconciliation, unity, peace and justice. Thus, Christians became the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Our countries face common problems such as the refugee problem, the ageing of society, gender justice, the drift of youth away from the Christian faith, climate justice, etc.

How can we as Christians contribute to solving all these big and serious problems? How can the Churches of Korea and Japan work together for peace, justice and truth to prevail between the two countries and the Northeast Asia, and even in the AI era?

Our model should be the early Christians. And we today, if we emphatically strive to make a “revolution of the heart”, if we live in Christ, then we will contribute to unity and love between our two countries not on the basis of unstable economic and geopolitical interests, which change from one moment to the next, but on the basis of the unchanging “stone of faith” and the “new commandment” (Jn 13:34) of love.

My beloved,

Having conveyed to you the wishes of His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch

Bartholomew for the success of the Conference, which has set as its goal the study of the very important topic under the title: “The Role of the Church as an Apostle of Peace and Reconciliation”, please allow me to wish you: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:13).

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