



# MISSION CONNECTIONS

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Summer 2021



## Building Bridges for God's Peace

**Unzu Lee**  
*Mission co-worker serving in East Asia*

Dear friends,

Every morning I take bus 273 to go to PC(USA)'s Korea Mission Office at the Korean Christian Ecumenical Building. About three stops before I get off, I hear the recorded female voice announcing "Jongro 2-ka, Top-gol Park." Sometimes, the announcement triggers my memory of what my grandmother told me. She said, after my grandfather moved his family to Seoul from Sineuiju so that my mother could attend medical school in Seoul, he operated a bookstore. Around noon, my grandmother had to take over the bookstore so that he could go to Topgol Park to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through my mind's imaginary eyes, sometimes I even see my late grandfather talking with some people visiting the park. According to my grandmother, Elder Noh, Jaehon, my grandfather, was very effective because he could carry on long and productive conversations with almost everybody due to his profound knowledge of Buddhist sutras and Confucian classical writings. This was in the 1940s when there were very few Christians in Seoul, Korea.

Some 80 years later, I, his granddaughter, came to Korea from the U.S.A. to work as a mission co-worker. In the meantime, the Korea that used to be one nation for thousands of years, was divided into two and remains so. No citizen of either country is allowed to cross the line of division, and the UN Command, led by the U.S. military, still has wartime command control in South Korea, meaning the two countries are still in a state of war. Pyeong Yang, where Christianity flourished and was once called Jerusalem of the East, now only has two church buildings and is known to

have dozens of house churches, while Seoul has too many Christian churches to count. So, one might wonder: What is Unzu doing in Seoul, Korea? What Christian mission is there to do? After spending a little more than a year in the States since I was appointed to this position, I arrived in Korea on March 16, 2021. Although I came to Korea fully vaccinated, I had to be quarantined for two weeks, and the day after my release went like this:

I walk to the area where my home church, Young Nak Presbyterian Church, is still standing. The church no longer looks the way I remember it because it has added many more structures. I look for the cornerstone of the original church building because the brush writing engraved on the cornerstone belongs to my grandfather. His writing can also be found in two other places. After connecting with all three, I walked over to the Myeongdong Cathedral, which served as a sanctuary for the Korean democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Although I have often visited Korea over time since I emigrated in 1965, this time, my presence in this land feels very different because I am not here for a short visit. Who would have known that I would be back to live here after all these years? Indeed, this is the land where my ancestors are buried, a few known and many unknown. I have come back in a full circle!



**This gate is the entrance gate to the Topgol Park called the 3.1.Moon. This is the site where the Declaration of Independence from Japanese colonial rule was read on March 1, 1919.**

As a person of hyphenated identity, Korean-American, I have lived most of my life with a double consciousness. This means bridge-building between the two worlds is second nature to me. I am here to live and work as a liaison between the PC(USA) and partner entities, including the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) in South Korea, the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) of North Korea, the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC) and the Ecumenical Forum for Korea (EFK). In our intricately interconnected world, mission can no longer be one-directional. I am very happy to be the bridge and am committed to building bridges.

Most of the things I have done since coming to Korea have been in response to requests that have come to me from the NCCCK. At their request, I wrote three short pieces on anti-Asian violence to educate Christians in Asia. I participated and provided leadership in the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) Consultation on Korea Peace, which took place on June 25, 2021, the day when the



**The Korea Peace Treaty is long overdue!**

Korean War broke out 71 years ago in 1950. Following the consultation, I started serving as a member of the joint working group on behalf of the NCCCUSA. At this time, the prospect of achieving Korea peace seems precarious. The ban that President Trump's government imposed on U.S. citizens who want to travel to North Korea is still in effect; the North-South Korea relations are at an impasse; the U.S. and Republic of Korea (US-ROK) forces are currently engaged in joint military exercises despite North Korea's grave displeasure, and North Korea is currently experiencing severe food insecurity. Currently, the hottest issue in Korea is the anti-discrimination law that is before Congress, and the loudest voice against this law is coming from the Protestant Christian sector. At the invitation of the NCCCK Human Rights Center, I have shared stories of PC(USA)'s faithful struggle with LGBTQ+ issues and will continue to serve as a resource. I yearn for the day when I will be able to visit with partners in Hong Kong in person. In the meantime, I remain committed to being a bridge for God's peace in any way I can. My heart is full of thanksgiving for this call.

Please pray for Hong Kong and participate in the Korea Peace Appeal campaign to end the Korean War: 한반도 종전 평화 캠페인 Peace Campaign to End the Korean War. Visit [en.endthekoreanwar.net](http://en.endthekoreanwar.net).

Thank you for accompanying and supporting me financially and through prayer as together we build bridges for God's peace.

Unzu

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"Lee—E200491" (individual giving)  
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*Thank you for your faithful support.*