

**PRESS RELEASE****5<sup>TH</sup> ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES, 13-16 OCTOBER 2015**

As agreed at a meeting of the delegates from the Asia Pacific region at the ICRC meeting in Cardiff, UK in September 2013, the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the ICRC was hosted by the Independent Reformed Church in Korea with the theme of the Sacraments.

Delegates were accommodated in the Hoam Faculty House at Seoul National University which is on the bus route direct from Incheon Airport. Each day the delegates were conveyed the 18kms to the facilities of the Riverside Church at Anyang south of Seoul where also most meals, including breakfast, were provided by a happy and capable staff of volunteers.

Each of the ten ICRC churches in the Asia-Pacific region was represented. Observers were also present from several other churches along with representatives of ICRC member churches in The Netherlands, Canada, USA and South Africa who have mission interest in the region. Including about 70 delegates from the churches, the total number attending the Conference was about 170.

The Conference was opened with welcoming greetings by the Convener of this regional conference, Rev. Prof. Heon Soo Kim of the IRCK, and followed by worship conducted by Rev. Byoung Kil Chung, minister of the Riverside Church. Farewell greetings were then brought by Rev. John Goris who had been the Convener for Missions Committee of the ICRC for many years and facilitated the past four Asia-Pacific Regional Conferences. Rev. Dr Rowland Ward, the Convener for Regional Conferences of the ICRC appointed in September 2013 by the ICRC Cardiff, expressed appreciation for Brother Goris' long and faithful service given unobtrusively and beneficially since 1997.

Dr Ward outlined the aim of the Regional Conference to benefit the wider church, particularly through producing useful materials for village pastors following the meeting. We need to remember we are here to serve the church.

While the major papers had been provided in electronic form before the Conference, all participants were provided with two properly bound volumes of these along with the text of most devotions and church introductions. These documents had been translated into Korean. This was of great benefit for the Korean brothers, and the translations were also projected on a screen for the benefit of the significant number of men and women from the Independent Reformed Church who were present during most sessions.

The theme was the Sacraments and this was addressed in several ways: through three devotions at the beginning of each day, ten devotions during the sessions by those representing their church federation, three evening lectures (by Rev. Professor Dr Mohan Chacko, Rev. Dirk van Garderen and Rev. Professor Dr Hae Moo Yoo) and three bible studies, prepared by Rev. Professor Heon Soo Kim, and group discussions on these. These, especially the last paper, stimulated considerable discussion. Clearly, the programme was very full but it worked very well, and it is hoped that the aim of the Conference mentioned above will be fulfilled.

The organization of the Conference by the Independent Reformed Church in Korea has set a fine benchmark for the future. As well as valuable opportunities for net-working, there was a visit on Thursday to Holy Covenant Independent Reformed Church and Press in central Seoul where a wonderful lunch was provided. A visit was also paid to Yanghwajin Foreign Missionaries Cemetery in Seoul and a closing festive meal and concert was held on Friday evening. A wonderful team of helpers has ensured smooth running throughout the Conference. New relationships have been made and old ones renewed and strengthened. We give thanks to the Lord who blessed the gathering and gave us the privilege of learning and praying around his Word.

The next Asia-Pacific Regional Conference is scheduled for Melbourne, Australia in 2019.