



MODERATOR OF THE 2018 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Rev. Daniel Cho, B.A., M.Div.

Monday, November 19, 2018

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Freeland,

I bring you greetings on behalf of the 2018 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada which met June 3-6, 2018 in Waterloo, Ontario.

The General Assembly considered a report on the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (the Ban Treaty). The threat of nuclear war is corrosive to any vision of a world at peace. The church does not believe that any nation, including Canada, has the right before God to resort to nuclear weapons, either offensively or defensively. The church laments the lack of progress towards reducing and abolishing nuclear weapons.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its effort to establish the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons. Project Ploughshares, a project of the Canadian Council of Churches and an ecumenical partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has also supported this work.

Setsuko Thurlow was thirteen when an atomic bomb dropped on her hometown of Hiroshima. Ms. Thurlow has spent her life advocating against nuclear weapons. Now a Canadian, she received the Order of Canada for her work in 2006 and accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 on behalf of ICAN. In her Nobel Lecture she spoke about people who survived atomic and nuclear weapons testing and explosions:

“We have stood in solidarity with those harmed by the production and testing of these horrific weapons around the world. People from places with long-forgotten names, like Moruroa, Ekker, Semipalatinsk, Maralinga, Bikini. People whose lands and seas were irradiated, whose bodies were experimented upon, whose cultures were forever disrupted.

We were not content to be victims. We refused to wait for an immediate fiery end or the slow poisoning of our world. We refused to sit idly in terror as the so-called great powers took us past nuclear dusk and brought us recklessly close to nuclear midnight. We rose up. We shared our stories of survival. We said: humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist.”

We stand with ICAN, Project Ploughshares and Ms. Thurlow: humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist. For nuclear war to break out, deterrence or failsafe mechanisms need to break down only once.

The Government of Canada did not participate in the negotiation of the Ban Treaty and did not vote when it was adopted. Will the Government of Canada show global leadership by signing and ratifying the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons?

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall and The Rev. Donald Muir

Please be assured that you and your colleagues in Parliament are in the prayers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Cho".

Rev. Daniel Cho
Moderator
The 144th General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

CC: The Hon. Erin O'Toole, Conservative Party critic for Foreign Affairs, Hélène Laverdière, NDP critic for Foreign Affairs.