April 10, 2015

Bishop Barbel Wartenberg-Potter

Lubeck, Germany

Dear Bishop Wartenberg-Potter,

It is with a profound sense of thanksgiving that, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, I write to celebrate the life of your beloved husband, Philip Potter.

While God has called him “home”, we are deeply saddened that, as an inspiring ecumenical leader of our time, he is no longer with us. We rejoice that he was God’s precious gift to Christ’s church across our world. The PCT was immensely privileged to receive his strong support during the darkest days in its history.

When Philip became the General Secretary in 1972, the PCT had already been forced by the government to withdraw PCT’s membership in the WCC because the WCC had called for the admission of China to the United Nations in 1966. When the Taiwan government was expelled from the UN in 1971, it forbade the PCT to participate in the WCC. However, Dr. Potter responded effectively and instructed his international affairs colleagues (CCIA) to collaborate with the then World Alliance of Reformed Churches in sending pastoral delegations to Taiwan to demonstrate international ecumenical solidarity with us. This accompaniment was instrumental in securing the early release of my predecessor, Rev. C. M. Kao and in our joyful return to the WCC fellowship in 1983.

On Easter Sunday, just a week ago, General Secretary Dr. Tveit, celebrated with us our 150th anniversary. Our whole church was able to express to him its deep gratitude during a national Thanksgiving Service attended by over 15,000 people.

Indeed, we give thanks to God, for the life of Philip Potter, a champion against evil and injustice, a courageous prophet of our time, and God’s faithful servant. He will forever remain fondly in our heart as a true brother. We pray that you may find comfort in knowing how much he is loved and treasured across the globe.

Respectfully,

Rev. LYIM Hong-Tiong

General Secretary

CC: Rev. Yang-en Cheng, PCT Central Committee member