

My Thoughts on the Inter-Religious Association for Peace and Development

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Mind–Body unity was certainly one of True Father's favorite speech topics, especially in the mid-1970s when I had the privilege and opportunity to hear him speak so often at the Belvedere Estate in New York. Although Father stressed the importance of disciplining the mind to be the subject partner over the body, he never recommended an entirely ascetic path, either for individuals or societies. God wants us to fulfill all three blessings, not just the first.

Similarly, the introduction to the Divine Principle tells us that the path of science, economy and politics is not enough, but also criticizes religions for being isolated divisive. Communism certainly erred by ignoring the spiritual and presuming that the ideal society could be built by hard work (preferably by others!) and political action. But religion is criticized too: much prayer and study without real action in the physical, real world will not get the Kingdom of God built either.



Our Western societies are in deep trouble. The United States is more divided than I can ever remember, with almost no evidence of a willingness to compromise in Washington or anywhere else. Here in Britain and Europe we are still arguing about Brexit. Violence is breaking out in France.

Many would agree that it would be a fine thing if our religious leaders would speak truth to power. On the other hand, the religious leaders are easily sidetracked into theological and doctrinal issues and need the discipline and focus that can come from engaging with real world issues such as poverty, injustice and challenges to the environment. No one seems to have an answer to the breakdown of the family, immorality and the radicalization of young people.

I see the two organizations recently established by True Mother, the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace and the International Association for Peace and Development, for spiritual leaders, as being a new approach and solution to this age old challenge. We have found enthusiasm for this model both in the postmodern societies of Western Europe and the Muslim nations of North Africa and the Middle East. Just like a mother encouraging her children to do well in school but also to invest time and energy in the wellbeing of others, with these two institutions, True Mother is trying to bring out the best of both the mind and body in society.