

True Love and the 20th Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks on the United States

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We all remember where we were at the moment that changed America. Whether in the heart of New York City or abroad, the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, deeply impacted the nation and the rest of the world. Twenty years later, we remember the nearly 3,000 people who were killed in the World Trade Center attacks and the countless lives affected by the devastation.

Prior to 9/11, the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founders of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), had called for a World Clergy Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony of 12,000 couples, scheduled for September 22 at New York's Madison Square Garden. The event was canceled in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, which also challenged the interreligious and world peace premise upon which it was based.

In the days after the World Trade Center's destruction, Unificationist leaders and American Clergy Leadership Conference ([ACLCLC](#)) clergy ministered to many bereaved families, as well as police, firefighters, and others at the site of the attack. Many even went out on the first night.

Rev. Moon offered his interpretation of the attacks after much prayer, saying, "Now is the time to change everything. America and Americans must take the lead in practicing 'Love your enemy.'" FFWPU's co-founders saw the tragedy as an opportunity for a new world of love and compassion to emerge among all people.

As we observe the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, let's remember the most important teaching of Rev. and Dr. Moon: the root of world peace is true love, achieved through living a selfless life. Below is an excerpt from Dr. Moon's memoir, *Mother of Peace* (2020).

Half a century has passed since my husband and I first visited the Middle East. I still vividly remember the excitement, mixed with concern, that I felt when I took my first step into the desert with the warm wind in my face. At that time, as we visited three Middle Eastern nations, we earnestly prayed for the entire region to unite in one heart and realize peace.

For me, seeking peace is comparable to searching for a needle in the middle of a sandstorm. Success is accomplished only by the intervention of God, our Heavenly Parent. Thus it was with absolute faith, love and obedience in 1960 that my husband and I resolved never to turn back until we had established a peaceful world...

We are taught many things in the course of our lives... Knowledge and wisdom are precious, and we need to pursue them continuously. Nonetheless, of all teachings, what are the most important?

***The teachings of religion are the most important...** The doctrines of the religious founders, including Confucius, the Buddha, Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad, have served as driving forces shaping civilizations and safeguarding the human conscience throughout the ages. Religion is necessary for the eradication of the world of sin and the creation of the ideal world desired by God and humanity.*

*Accordingly, religion should be our lifelong companion... Our world houses many religions. What should these religions teach? Religion must first teach the truth about God. I do not mean simply that God exists; I mean teaching about our relationship with God. **True religion teaches the nature of God, the reality of God's love, and how to live in that love...***

*True love means living for the sake of others, serving others, not being served. True love means to forgive endlessly. Jesus told us to "forgive seventy times seven." The capacity to forgive your enemy and save his or her life does not appear overnight. It requires that we eliminate the resentment and anger in our hearts and see the countenance of God in the face of our enemy... **This is only possible when you lead a selfless life.***