

Religion and the Creation of World Peace

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The Third Assembly of the World's Religions



Photo date and location unknown

Respected major leaders of the different religious traditions, leaders in faith and scholars of religion:

It is an honor to welcome you to the third Assembly of the World's Religions, and to express my happiness in meeting all of you in Seoul, Korea, which is my homeland and that of my wife, Hak Ja Han. I hope you will have a rewarding and fruitful time during your stay.

The path pursued by religion

This is the third conference of the Assembly of the World's Religions. At the first conference, convened in 1985, I founded the Religious Youth Service and announced my plans for the first conference of the Council of the World's Religions. These projects, which I support every year, together with the *World Scripture* that was published last year, have become the front line of the campaign for worldwide interreligious harmony. In particular, youth leaders of various religious bodies have united in dedicated service activities, providing a stepping-stone for harmony and understanding between religions. In doing this, they have set up a valuable tradition for the future of humanity.

The second Assembly was convened in San Francisco in 1990. There, I announced the founding of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace (IRFWP). In August 1991, the historic founding conference of the IRFWP took place in Seoul. This year the IRFWP and the International Religious Foundation are jointly convening this conference.

As you know, this conference has been organized as part of the first World Culture and Sports Festival. Four years ago, when the Seoul Olympics took place, I formally announced my plan for the World Culture and Sports Festival, which will open a new page of harmony, exchange and cooperation among the peoples of this world village. Although the Olympics play an extremely important role, they lack the vertical values and spiritual dimension that are bestowed by God.

Because religion lies at the heart of culture, the Assembly of the World's Religions and IRFWP stand at the heart of the World Culture and Sports Festival. Religious ideals, together with the wisdom and values that accompany them, must permeate the education, scholarship, art, physical education, media, politics and economics of the world, and serve as their standard. The World Culture and Sports Festival seeks to guide the spiritual culture of humankind and pursue genuine values for human happiness. It will also be a historic event that points toward a peaceful, new world culture where God, people and all things merge together.

Toward a world of peace and happiness

We all are aware of the fact that our world is immersed in deep suffering. Although the Cold War may have come to an end, conflicts are still occurring in all corners of the world, and evil, hatred and injustice continue to afflict humanity. There are many people suffering in despair and spiritual poverty, even in materially abundant, advanced nations. Although many people are seeking solace through drugs and indiscriminate sex, they are running headlong down the road to spiritual and physical ruin. Obviously, no one desires a world of such evil, conflict and despair.

I came seeking to open the way for the original nature of humanity to clear away this unhappiness, and to build a world overflowing with peace and joy. This is the very path that religions have sought to tread. Nonetheless, the ideal world for which humanity has been yearning has not yet been realized. At the core of religion lies the desire to reveal the source of the unhappiness and suffering of humanity. If we are ignorant of the source of suffering, we cannot even hope to get rid of it. The solution to this is possible only through knowledge derived from divine revelation.

We were born for true love

Today I intend to clarify the root cause of this problem, and to indicate its solution. God created the ancestors of humankind, Adam and Eve, and bestowed upon them the three great blessings: to be fruitful, to multiply and fill the earth, and to have dominion over all things. The meaning of the first blessing, to be fruitful, is that all individuals have to grow and become people of perfected character focusing on God's love. The second blessing signifies that a perfected man and woman have to become a true couple, give birth to children and, through treading the path of true parenthood, create an ideal family. The third blessing is to become inheritors of a heavenly environment on earth, free of want and distress, in the environment that God has provided.

God, the embodiment of true love, hoped that all people, who are the object partners of His love and whom He created as His sons and daughters, would become perfected incarnations of true love. He hoped that they would then establish a heavenly environment after achieving the conjugal ideal based on true love. Tragically, Adam and Eve deviated through unprincipled love in a stage of immaturity, before they had perfected the true love that God had blessed them with. They were driven out of paradise. Consequently the ancestors of humankind, who had lost true love, which is the source of life and their original divine nature, ignored God's blessing and started family life centering on the selfish love originating with Satan. Thus, they handed down the love, life and bloodline of Satan to their descendants.

God, determined to restore His ideal of creation that was not accomplished due to the Fall and committed to save humankind from unhappiness, has established religions to guide humanity. Accordingly, since Adam and Eve had become false parents, God needed to send the Messiah, that is, True Parents, to give rebirth to all humanity. God's ultimate and unchanging dispensational purpose is to find and establish True Parents. True Parents come as the personification of love and the seed of true life. A true family originates with the True Parents, and this family becomes the model for all families in their path of restoration.

God's true love is the love that He invests again and again, then forgetting how much He has invested. When God created His object partner of love, He Himself, who exists for the sake of others, invested 100 percent of His being and still desired to invest another 100 percent and even 1,000 percent more. God wants to invest Himself still more because He wants His loving child, who is His object partner of love, to be better than Himself.

Thus, the path of true love is the path of giving and giving yet again. Likewise, the path of True Parents, who are the embodiment of true love, is not one that seeks recognition but is the way of sacrificing for the sake of others. God established religions for His providence of salvation. The path they must exemplify is one of principle. Because human life is conceived as rooted in the ideal of love, the essence of human life is love. A being that is born on the basis of love needs to live for others in the same way God does. This is the principle of Heaven. Consequently, one can say that we are beings who have come into existence for the purpose of true love.

True love starts from the point of living for others. Human beings, as they were originally created, contained God's true love in their mind and body and responded to it naturally. In other words, the mind centering on true love responds to God, and the body automatically acts in unison with the mind. The true, united desire of mind and body, when there is no conflict between them, is to inherit God's true love completely and to respond to it substantially. The ideal of a human being, which is the unity of mind and body, is achieved when he or she possesses God's true love in totality.

The ideal of genuine freedom, peace and happiness is attainable only when the mind and body become one focusing on true love. Furthermore, we can achieve a free and peaceful family, nation and world only on the foundation of the unity of mind and body. The cardinal point of peace ought to be found not at the

global or national level but in the relationship between mind and body within the individual.

Yesterday, thirty thousand couples from all corners of the world received the holy marriage Blessing and secured the establishment of a new family tradition grounded in God's love. The ceremony you attended was not simply an important wedding ceremony convened by one religious order.

Society today is being shaken to its foundations by the collapse of sexual morality, the deviant behavior of young people, and the breakdown of families. How can we tackle this situation? The seeds of moral corruption sown by Satan and the ancestors of humankind have borne their historical fruit. The phenomena of the Last Days of hell on earth, where the way of Heaven and human morality have been ravaged and where men and women have become like animals, are quite evident. This tragedy has been further exacerbated by a tendency to extreme egocentrism and a proliferation of free sex, which seems to imbue immorality with a rosy hue. Spiritually and morally, our world is facing a profound crisis. Not only are orderly families disintegrating but the minds and bodies of youth, who represent the next generation, are being damaged as well.

The family is the basic unit of the ideal of creation

This crisis facing humanity can be solved only through the Messiah, True Parents. They are the owners of God's true love and true life. Contrary to popular trends, God's ideal of marriage places emphasis on the eternal relationship between one man and one woman before God, the sanctity of love and sex, God's Blessing, and the purpose of marriage being for one's descendants. This movement, which aims to realize an eternal ideal of couples and families centered on God's love in 160 nations, regardless of race and nationality, represents the bright future and hope of humanity.

The family is the basic unit of God's ideal of creation. The family is the basis for the establishment of the society and nation. God's ideal of a one-world family, transcending race and based on true love, is directly connected to the realization of a peaceful world. The people of the world can have children of goodness and practice correct ethics when they build blessed families under God's ideal of true love and become exemplary husbands and wives. Then ideal families that are the fruit of true love can be established, and ideal societies, ideal nations and the ideal world will come into being. The international wedding ceremony is providing a fundamental solution to the chronic ailments of modern society by restoring the original ideal for the family.

Now the time has come for religions to take leadership in the world. Leadership cannot emerge from blind faith or an arrogant and self-righteous attitude stemming from narrow-mindedness. True leadership arises when one subordinates oneself to the Will of Heaven and acts altruistically. It is time for religious people to step up and face their responsibility toward the conditions of this age and its unprincipled facets, and to examine themselves deeply. Religious people need to repent for their failure to exemplify the practice of love and, because they were engrossed in their personal salvation or the interests of their own religious denominations, for their failure to invest entirely for the salvation of humankind. This age requires the practice of love, not only faith.

God is calling us. He passionately desires to challenge injustice and evil in the world and express His true love. All religions need to be of one mind in making known and actualizing God's fervent hope for humanity. God transcends all rituals and doctrines, which have led to dispute between believers. He desires that we raise our spirit through profound spiritual dialogue and exchange with Him. Religions need to establish the spiritual order with which human beings, who have a spiritual nature, can align themselves closely. They have to systematize this spiritual order and create a lifestyle that expresses it rationally. Religious leaders of all creeds need to take the lead in self-discipline and, with mutual respect for each other, build influential interreligious organizations.

Realization of world peace through harmony among religions

Until I founded the Interreligious Federation for World Peace last year, I endured enormous difficulties. For forty years, I trod the path of sacrifice, living for the sake of others, while envisioning the hitherto unrealized ideal of interreligious harmony and the accomplishment of world peace in the fulfillment of God's Will. Despite the persecution of a number of intolerant religious groups in various countries, and a lack of understanding shown by successive generations of political regimes, and at the cost of many personal sacrifices, I determinedly worked to establish an ecumenical movement, an ecumenical theological seminary, the New Ecumenical Research Association and the publication of *World Scripture*. I have also continually supported the Council for the World's Religions and the Assembly of the World's Religions for the promotion of interreligious harmony.

One may ask why I have initiated all these projects. All I desire when I involve myself in these activities, including the convening of the Assembly of the World's Religions and the activities of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace, is to fulfill the Will of God, the Parent of humankind. My only aspiration, together with all of you enlightened religious leaders and religious scholars, is to realize the hope of God

and all people on earth.

Rather than satisfying ourselves with interreligious harmony, the next step from here is to involve ourselves more positively in social activities, by creating a broad-based, united organization aimed at world peace, in cooperation with opinion makers in the academic, political and media spheres. In cultivating and guiding this organization to fulfill God's Will on earth, religions need to exemplify the spirit of living for others.

Let us all open our spiritual ears once again and, inclining them toward Heaven, follow God's advice with a humble heart. We need to be aware of the mission that God has bequeathed to the religious leaders of this age and, by correctly guiding the human spirit, secure the spiritual and mental order of the new world culture.

I hope that this conference will provide a forum for discussion based on God's wisdom, transcending the dimension of human insight. I want to express my appreciation for the dedication of His Grace Dr. Gregorios, who has provided a model of organization and management as chairman of the conference. I would also like to thank all the committee chairmen and representatives for their hard work.