

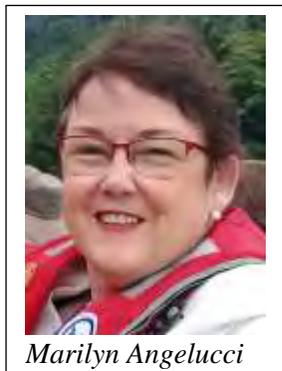
Approaching the Muslim World with True Parents' Thought

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Rev. and Mrs. Moon with Sheikh Ahmed Kuftaro, the Grand Mufti of Syria, in 1989

There were 1.8 billion Muslims in the world as of 2015 — 24% of the global population — according to a Pew Research Center estimate. Islam is currently the world's second-largest religion (after Christianity), but it is the fastest-growing major religion.



Marilyn Angelucci

This may scare some people, but as Unificationists we should take this fact very seriously. True Mother proclaims that she will fulfill her mission before she goes to the spiritual world. That mission is to give the Blessing to all the people of the world. Islam comprises a quarter of the world's population and is growing every day. Therefore, it is essential we find a way to reach the Muslim world as the filial children of our True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon.

My husband and I have been working in the Middle East since 1996 and have found that most Muslims are very tolerant and open-minded. They have a deep love for God and believe that religion should play an important role in people's lives. They follow God's words and tradition and are deeply conservative.

Because of this, they have little respect for the Western world which has lost its religious values and is becoming more secular every day. They become deeply disturbed when they see how Western values are influencing their young people. Because of the lack of values of the West, some Muslims see the West as the enemy who is promoting a sinful lifestyle and should be stopped.

But the reality is that the Muslim world is more open to Unificationist values and principles than the Western world. They have a great deal in common with the world of Unificationists. They are desperate to preserve the family and family values. They honor purity and marriage. They understand the value of a relationship with God and religious tradition as a cornerstone for the community and society.

Sharing our values and principles with the Muslim world is not difficult on a personal level but because of the political and religious control we have to be sensitive and adjust our approach to meet the current situation of Islamic nations.

Concerning the task of approaching Muslims with the Divine Principle, it is important to understand the Muslim world, the religion and the culture, before we start to share our ideology. This is important especially if we are not from a Muslim background.

We may easily misrepresent our True Parents if we approach this task from a Judeo-Christian perspective, which non-Muslims tend to do. We must understand the Islamic religion, culture, values, and lifestyle in order to be qualified to share our principles with the Islamic world.

In reality, the only way we can truly embrace the Muslim world is through a heart of service, piety, sincerity, and love. This is the heart of a True Abel. Our approach must be one of humility. We have so much to learn from them and we have so many resources to share with them and this must be the foundation of our work. They must see us as an elder brother who is protecting and nurturing them to be prosperous and successful.

Another important point to consider is that in some interpretations of Islam it is forbidden to convert to another religion. There are a number of countries that expressly make apostasy a capital offense. However, only a small number of cases apply of capital punishment. Also, this belief is not held by moderate Muslims because this is not clearly supported from the Quran. Although the law is not enforced in this day and age, a Muslim converting to another religion would be completely and absolutely ostracized by their family, relatives and community.

Because of this cultural pressure it is important that when we do outreach in the Muslim world *we do not do so as a religion*. We cannot use religious terms such as “reverend” or “church.” Working in this part of the Islamic world it is necessary to work through the Family Federation for World Peace, Universal Peace Federation, Women’s Federation for World Peace, or Youth and Service for Peace. Any of these associations works well. We are not converting people to our understanding, but sharing with them how to live a good life, how to apply the Principles of God in their life, and how to become true believers. They must not feel we are trying to change them but only trying to enhance their own faith and helping them to fulfil their own desire to live with God and become a godly person.

Our goal in doing outreach in the Middle East — we believe should be a common point in all places — is to connect the people to our True Parents and eventually to support them to become true parents themselves. Of course, they need to learn and apply Divine Principle, which is the way to become true parents and receive the Blessing. In teaching Divine Principle, we need to revise our current format, because it has been written for a Christian audience. We need to make it acceptable to a Muslim audience. In order to make these proper adjustments it is necessary to know which parts of the Divine Principle can be acceptable in the Muslim world and be aware of what concepts are not acceptable.



Educating Palestinian youth in Jordan

The Principle of Creation

As we examine the Divine Principle in relation to the Quran we will find that most of the content of the Principle of Creation is compatible. Passages of the Quran support the principles of resemblance, duality, and purpose of creation. Other parts are completely acceptable although there may not be clear evidence of support from the scriptures. Especially, Muslims have a clear belief in the spiritual world and our explanation is enlightening for them.

One aspect of the Principle of Creation not compatible with Islam is the concept of God as our Father and therefore Heavenly Parents. Actually, the Quran speaks against this concept strongly, scolding those who believe that God can have literal children: “What, has your Lord favored you with sons and taken to Himself from the angels females? Surely it is a monstrous thing you are saying.” (Quran 62:42) This attack is actually against those (such as many pre-Islamic Arabs) who believe that gods or God can literally have children. Although these words are in the Quran, some great Muslim leaders, such as the late Grand Mufti of Syria, taught that we are the children of God.

Muslims accept that humankind was created with the spirit of God, but the point they reject is that we are the physical children of God. Their concept of God is a god of power, might and mercy. If God was to be close to man, it would make Him weak and vulnerable, so the Quran tried to distance God and man as much as possible. But they accept that we were created from God’s spirit: “When I have shaped him and breathed My spirit in him.” (Quran 38:73).

However, in the Sufi interpretation, God is a very personal being and they relate to Him as a Loving God. They also teach a concept called *fana*, which is a process of gradually coming closer to God until becoming completely one with the beloved.

The Fall

The Quran is not written chronologically but is organized by the lengths of the chapters. Therefore, the story of the Fall is not found all in the same chapter as in the Bible. But the story in the Quran about the Fall of Adam and Eve is very similar to the story we use in the Principle. The story contains Adam and Eve, Satan, and the Tree of Eternity. Also, after consuming the fruit, Adam and Eve cover their lower parts. Using this story, we can explain the Fall and it is very acceptable to the Muslim audience.

In addition, the Fall of the Angel was clearly explained as Iblis (Lucifer) refused to bow himself to Adam. Also, Adam and Eve admit their mistake and God sends them out of Paradise and creates enmity between them and the archangel. There is also support for the possibility of sexual intercourse with a spirit. Jinn refers to the spirits that stay on earth and disturb humans, different than angels, spiritual beings who were made from fire. Fornication is a major sin in most religions and especially in Islam. There is much evidence of how Satan (Shaytan) is influencing humans and how it is humans’ responsibility to resist the temptation of Satan and follow the word of God.

The only problem we have with the Fall and Islam is that they don’t have a concept of original sin. At the time of the Fall according to the Quran, God forgave Adam and Eve and the sin they committed was not passed down to the ancestors. The Quran says that Satan tempts all people according to their life. If they live an evil life then Satan can influence them; if they live a good life and follow the will of God then Satan has no control over them. Also, there is no concept of inherited sin in the Quran.

Other sections of the Divine Principle are written for a Christian audience; therefore, some of it is not relevant to a Muslim audience, such as Christology. But predestination, eschatology and the last days are well documented in the Quran. For the Muslim, Resurrection is a concept having to do with that time period. Like the Bible, the Quran speaks of these times in symbols, so a clear interpretation is necessary which can be given through the view of the Principle. Also, the Mission of Jesus can be discussed effectively because they understand Jesus to be a special prophet; they even call him Messiah, prepared by God and also understand that the crucifixion was not necessary for salvation. Actually, they believe strongly that Jesus was not crucified.

The Providence of Restoration

All aspects of the Divine Principle cannot be correlated to the Quran and should not be. The Divine Principle is a new expression of truth for our new age. We should not say revelation because the Muslims believe that the Quran is the last revelation. However, the Quran says:

“And if whatever trees upon the earth were pens and the sea [was ink], replenished thereafter by seven [more] seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.” (Quran 31:27)

So, there is the understanding that all the truth of God has not been revealed yet, since it is limitless and therefore they can accept the concept of new expression of truth.

All the stories of the Providence of Restoration are also mentioned in the Quran with little differences. The prophets Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are all honored and recognized in the Quran. In sharing this part of the Principle, it is important to mention the providential significance of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and the history of Islam if possible.

Of course, the most important part of the Divine Principle is the announcement of the Second Coming of the Messiah, our True Parents. Islam does have a concept of Messiah, in the sense that they believe that Jesus was a Messiah and will return again in the Day of Judgment. When the Messiah comes again they also believe him to be of Muslim background. So, we have to approach this in a different way. Also, it is very sensitive if we introduce someone who has a higher position than the Prophet (PBUH).

In our experience in the Muslim world, we would introduce True Parents as the King and Queen of Peace. This was very effective especially through teaching the life course of our True Parents. Through their life course it is clear that there have been no other persons in human history who have done as much for peace as True Parents. They are obviously the King and Queen of Peace. We also give an overview of our movement and explain how True Parents are building the ideal world in this day and age.

We do not ask people to leave their religion, rather to join our organization and help to build the ideal world as a True Muslim or a Muslim-Unificationist. We encourage them to develop their own personal relationship with True Parents as their parents and follow their example as True Parents.



A female MP in Afghanistan who has done numerous projects together with WFWP

Conclusion

We need to proclaim the coming of our True Parents to the entire world, not just the Judeo-Christian world. In this day and age, the world consists of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, etc. We cannot ignore this fact. We need to find a way to share this great news with all the people of the world and at the same time be sensitive to their belief system and culture.

As we approach *Cheon Il Guk*, I suggest we spend more time and resources on creating educational material with this goal in mind, to make the great teachings of our True Parents acceptable to all people of the world.

Marilyn Angelucci was born and educated in the United States, earning a B.A. in psychology and an M.A. in religious education from UTS. She and her husband, Umberto Angelucci, have worked for over 20 years in various organizations on three different continents and in seven different nations. She currently serves as Secretary General of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in the Middle East, educating young people and families, and strengthening family values. Marilyn and Umberto are the proud parents of two wonderful sons and three young grandchildren.