

Address by Mr. Kook Jin Moon

Peace Banquet with
Members of Malaysian Parliament

Guest of Honor:

YB Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Pankikar Amin Bin Haji Mulia

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Parliament of Malaysia

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Deputy Speaker YB Datuk Ronald Kiandee, representing the Speaker of the House, members of the Parliament of Malaysia, Ambassadors for Peace, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of my parents, Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, as well as my sister In Jin Moon and myself, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your invitation to visit your wonderful country and speak here today.

I have long admired Malaysia as a moderate Muslim country where Islam exists in harmony with other religions. I believe that the invitations

extended to my parents, who are religious leaders known throughout the world for their emphasis on harmony among religions, give clear evidence to this admirable aspect of Malaysian society.

Prime Minister Najib Razak in his address to the United Nations last autumn called for a “Global Movement of the Moderates” of all religions to combat religious extremism. The Prime Minister’s effort, which he repeated at the University of Oxford just last month, is very much in keeping with the teachings of my father and deserves the support of religious persons everywhere.

My father was born in 1920 in what is now North Korea. He was raised in a Christian home and met Jesus in a vision when he was 15 years old. In the public ministry that he began in 1945 and continues to this day at age 91, my father teaches that all religions have the mission to liberate humankind from the spiritual ignorance that results from our separation from God. He teaches that religions should work in harmony with each other to accomplish this task.

In Christian terms we refer to my father as Messiah, Savior and the returning Christ. But he does not come for the sake of Christians alone. Nor does he consider it his mission to propagate

the Christian faith to the exclusion of other religions.

Instead, my father is the conduit for all people to inherit the True Love that is God's divine essence.

This is how we become the true sons and daughters of God. My father teaches that God's true love can and should be inherited by people in all religious traditions, and that all religions can achieve their ideals of unity and peace by deepening their understanding of God.

I would like to read a passage from my father's autobiography to give you a better idea of his approach to religious harmony and peace. This

autobiography was originally published in Korea in 2009 and has sold well over a million copies. The Japanese translation has also sold more than a million copies. Today, I will read from the English translation, titled, “As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen”. The section I will read is on pages 234 to 244 and is titled, “The Power of Religion to Turn People to Goodness.” The passage has been edited slightly in the interest of time. Please refer to the book for the complete text.

On August 2, 1990, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein staged an armed invasion of Kuwait, igniting the possibility of war in the Persian Gulf. This area has long been a tinderbox, and I

could see that the world was about to be swept up in the vortex of war. I concluded that Christian and Muslim leaders must meet to stop the conflict. I acted immediately to do everything I could to stop a war in which innocent people were sure to die.

On October 2 of the same year, I convened on short notice an emergency conference of the Council for the World's Religions in Cairo, Egypt, to deliver my urgent message of peace to the highest spiritual authorities of the Middle East and the Muslim world. Many wondered why I, a person with no apparent ties to the Middle East, would convene such a meeting,

but to me it is simple. I believe every religion should contribute to world peace. A conflict between Christianity and Islam would be far worse than the conflict between democracy and communism. There is nothing more fearful than religious war.

I sent a message imploring President George H.W. Bush, who already was trying to limit the conflict, to avoid war in the Arab world, and instead work to bring about Saddam Hussein's retreat through diplomatic means.

Our emergency conference in Cairo involved top Muslim leaders and grand muftis from nine

countries, including representatives of the grand muftis of Syria and Yemen. At the core of the meeting was my desperate appeal to the Arab and Muslim world not to support Saddam Hussein's claim that this was a holy war.

Whether the United States won or Iraq won, what good would it do? What value would it have if it meant that bombs rained down, destroying houses, fields, hills, and precious innocent lives?

The Cairo conference was just one of our many peace activities. On September 11, 2001, we all felt utter horror when the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City were

destroyed by terrorists. Some people said this was the inevitable clash of civilizations between Islam and Christianity. But my view is different. In their purest form, Islam and Christianity are not religions of conflict and confrontation. They both place importance on peace. In my view, it is bigoted to brand all Islam as radical, just as it is bigoted to say that Islam and Christianity are fundamentally different. The essence of all religions is the same.

Immediately following the collapse of the towers, I organized religious leaders from New York and around the country to pray and

minister to the victims and first responders at Ground Zero. Then, in October, I convened a major interfaith conference for peace in New York City. Ours was the first international gathering in New York after the tragedy.

These dramatic contributions to peace in times of war did not spring up from nothing. For decades prior, I have invested in promoting interreligious harmony.

In 1984, I brought together forty religious scholars, instructing them to compare the teachings that appear in the sacred texts of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and other major

world religions. The book that resulted from their efforts was *World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts*, published in 1991. What they found was that the sacred texts of religions convey the same or similar teachings more than seventy percent of the time. The remaining thirty percent are teachings that represent unique points of each religion. This means that most of the teachings of the major world religions are the same at their core. The same is true of religious practice. On the surface, some believers wear turbans, some wear prayer beads around their necks, others wear a cross, but they all seek the fundamental truths of the universe and try to

understand the will of the Divine One.

People often become friends even if all they have in common is the same particular hobby. When two strangers meet and discover they have the same hometown, they can immediately communicate as if they had known each other for decades. So, it is truly tragic that religions, which share the same teachings more than seventy percent of the time, still struggle to understand each other and communicate happily. They could talk about the things they have in common and take each other by the hand. Instead, they emphasize their differences and criticize one another.

Our experience when compiling World Scripture leads us to believe that it is not the religions of the world that are in error but the ways the faiths are taught. Bad teaching of faith brings prejudice, and prejudice leads to conflict. Muslims were branded terrorists after the 9/11 attack. But the vast majority of simple, believing families are peace-loving people.

Judaism, Islam, and Christianity are sharply divided against each other in today's world, but they share a common root. One of the main issues that keep them divided is their understanding of Jesus. To address this

problem, on May 19, 2003, I asked that Christians de-emphasize the cross in relations among the Abrahamic faiths. Thus, we enacted a ceremony of taking down the cross. We brought a cross from America, a predominantly Christian culture, and buried it in the Field of Blood in Israel. This is the field that was bought with the thirty pieces of silver that Judas Iscariot received for the betrayal of Jesus.

Later that year, on December 23, some three thousand Ambassadors for Peace from all religions, and from around the world, joined with seventeen thousand Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem's Independence Park

to symbolically remove the crown of thorns from the head of Jesus and replace it with a crown of peace. They then marched for peace through Jerusalem. Local authorities granted permissions and protected our efforts, and Palestinian and Israeli families supported our march for peace by placing a light in front of their homes.

Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest mosque in Islam after those in Mecca and Medina, is located in Jerusalem. It is the spot from which the Prophet Mohammad is said to have ascended to heaven. Ours was the only mixed religious group welcomed to all parts of this

house of worship. The mosque leaders guided the Christian and Jewish leaders who had participated in the peace march to the sacred spaces of the mosque. We were able to open a door that had been closed tightly, and prepared the way for many Muslim leaders to communicate at a new level with their Christian and Jewish brothers and sisters.

Human beings like peace, but they also enjoy conflict. Human beings will take the most gentle of animals and make them fight. They will have roosters fight and peck each other with their sharp beaks until pieces of soft flesh begin to fall away. Then, people will turn

around and tell their children, “Don’t fight with your friends. Play nice.”

The fundamental reason that wars occur is not religion or race. It is connected to what lies deep inside human beings. People like to attribute the causes of armed conflicts to such things as science or the economy, but the actual fundamental problem lies within human beings ourselves.

Religion’s role is to turn human beings toward goodness and eliminate their evil nature that finds enjoyment in fighting. Examine the major religions of the world. They all hold a peaceful

world as their ideal. They all want to see a kingdom of heaven, utopia, or paradise. Religions have different names for this ideal, but they all seek such a world. There are numerous religions in the world, and virtually everyone is divided into countless factions and denominations. But the essential hope for all is the same: They want the Kingdom of Heaven and a world of peace. The human heart has been torn to shreds by the violence and enmity at our core. The kingdom of love will heal it.

The greatest obstacle to the world of peace is avarice in peoples' hearts. It starts in individuals and expands to the nation, and

hearts stained with avarice cause division and conflict at every level. Countless people throughout history have shed their blood and died in conflicts caused by avarice.

To eliminate such conflicts, we need a great revolution to change the erroneous values and thinking that are widespread in the world today. The complex problems our societies face today can be resolved quickly if there is a revolution in peoples' thinking. If each individual and nation begins to look out for the other first, working together with the other, the problems of modern society will be resolved.

Throughout my life, I dedicated myself to efforts for peace. Whenever peace is discussed, I become emotional. Tears begin to well up in my eyes, my voice chokes, and I can hardly swallow. It moves me deeply just to imagine the day when the world becomes one and begins to enjoy peace. That is the nature of peace. It links people who think differently, are of different races, and speak different languages. Our hearts yearn for this world and harbor a hope that it will be realized.

However, peace comes through concrete action, and not just having a vague dream. But building a movement for peace has not always

been easy. There have been many difficulties, and it has required large sums of money. I have not done this for my own honor, or to make money. All I did was invest my full effort, so that we can have a world where a strong and true peace takes root. For as long as I have been doing this work, I have never been lonely. This is because, ultimately, peace is the desire of every person in the world. It is strange, though. Everyone wants peace, but still it has not come.

Each religion today thinks of itself as the highest, rejecting and looking down on other religions. It is not right to build fences against

other religions and denominations.

A religion is like a wide river flowing toward an ideal, peaceful world. The river flows for long distances before it comes to the wide expanse of peace. On its way, many streams flow into it. The streams cease to be streams from the point they meet the river. From that point, they, too, become part of the river. In this way, they become one.

The river does not reject any of the streams that flow into it. It accepts them all. It embraces all the streams and forms a single flow as it continues toward the ocean. People in the

world today do not understand this simple truth. The streams that seek out the river and flow into it are the numerous religions and denominations of today. Each stream traces its origin to a different spring, but they are all going to the same destination. They are seeking the ideal world overflowing with peace.

Peace will never come to this earth unless we first tear down the walls between religions. For thousands of years, religions have grown in alliance with particular ethnic groups, and so they are surrounded by high cultural walls.

Tearing these down is an extremely difficult task. For thousands of years, each religion has

surrounded itself with such high walls, insisting that it is the only correct religion. In some cases, religions have expanded their influence and entered into conflicts and fights with other religions, using God's name in places that had nothing to do with His will.

The will of God lies in peace. A world fragmented by differences in nationality, race, and religion, where people attack and fight one another and shed one another's blood, is not what God wants. When we shed blood and fight each other in His name, we only cause Him pain. A world torn to shreds has been created out of the desires of people to promote

their own wealth and glory. It does not represent the will of God. God clearly told me so. I am only His errand boy, receiving His words and carrying them out on Earth.

There are close to two hundred countries in the world. For all these countries to enjoy peace, the power of religion is absolutely necessary.

The power of religion is in the love that overflows from it. I am a religious person whose role is to convey love, so it is natural that I would work for world peace. There is no difference between Islam and Christianity in their commitment to bring about a world of peace.

In America, I lead a movement for peace, bringing together thousands of clergy who transcend denomination. Through this movement, we discuss ways that people of all faiths – Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, etc. – can come together. We devote our full efforts to change the hardened hearts of people.

My purpose is the same today as it was yesterday. It is to create one world with God at the center, a world brought together like a single nation without boundaries. All humanity will be citizens of this world, sharing a culture of

love. In such a world, there will be no possibility for division and conflict. This will mark the beginning of a truly peaceful world.

Those are the words of my father.

My father has put tremendous energy and resources into bringing harmony among the world's religions. He worked tirelessly to inspire all religious people to deepen their understanding of God's divine essence. He believes that the walls that separate the major religious traditions today will crumble when the people in these traditions inherit the true love of God. When that happens, religious people can

unite in harmony and lead the way toward a world of peace.

Many people are surprised on visiting the Unification Church World Headquarters Church in central Seoul to find that we have a special room to honor the prophet Mohammad, Jesus, Buddha and Confucius, whom we refer to as the Four Great Saints. The Unification Church maintains friendly relations with the major orders of Korean Buddhism. The leaders of both faiths regularly attend each other's religious events.

There are conflicts in every country. The fundamental causes of these conflicts lie in the

hearts of the people. It is the responsibility of religions to remove that cause, but religions cannot do that unless they inherit God's true love and relate to each other in harmony.

Malaysia is showing the world a model for religious harmony, and I look forward to seeing your continued development in this area.

May the abundant blessings of God be on Malaysia and your families.

Thank you.