

Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations

Hak Ja Han

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Your Excellencies. Distinguished parliamentarians from throughout Central America and the Caribbean. Honored Participants in the International Leadership Conference of the Universal Peace Federation. Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am pleased to address you today in San Jose, Costa Rica.

I believe it is very significant that we have gathered here for this special session of UPF's International Leadership Conference, and the launch, in this region, of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace. I am encouraged that parliamentarians have come together from not only Costa Rica, but from many other nations of Central America and the Caribbean as well.

My late husband, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, and I have always taught that individuals in every sector of society—including government, civil society, religion, business, academia, etc.—have a responsibility to work to build a world of universal and lasting peace. This is especially true of parliamentarians.

The parliament in any nation is the house of the people, a place where the voice of the people may be heard and the public good advanced by democratically elected representatives, parliamentarians.

Representative democracy is a noble tradition, with roots that date back many centuries, and now the most widely practiced form of governance.

Although you have gathered here from nations around the world, you share a common appreciation and respect for serving as the representatives of the people who elected you. You are servants of the people, and, as such, are expected to serve the public good, guided by basic principles of good governance: accountability, transparency, collegiality, inclusivity, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Good governance is secured not only by the policies and laws of the political system. It is also necessary that those who hold positions of power be people of good character, guided by their conscience and universal moral principles. Good governance also depends upon a well-educated and morally responsible citizenry.

It is for this reason that throughout history religion has been an important factor in contributing to the moral and spiritual development of both the political leaders and the citizens. It is imperative that, within

modern democratic systems, we do not lose sight of God, our creator and Heavenly Parent, nor of the spiritual principles and laws that have been taught throughout the ages.

My husband and I have dedicated our lives exclusively to building a world of lasting peace. This has been our lifelong mission.



We have always taught that peace is not merely an absence of violent conflict. Peace comes into being whenever relationships are characterized by harmony, balance and mutual respect. Such relationships are created when we practice unselfishness, living for the sake of others. This is the essence of true love.

True Love is the essence of God, who created all things, as our Heavenly Parent. We all have a nature that derives from our common origin. That is why we are capable of practicing True Love, toward one another, and toward all things in the world around us.

Our purpose and responsibility as the sons and daughters of God, our Heavenly Parent, is to become individuals of True Love, with mind and body united; on this foundation we can build marriages and families of true love, as the foundation for the society and the nation; and in turn we should care for the planet and all the forms of life that make up our environment. If we fulfill this responsibility, we can establish a world of peace.

My husband and I have applied this ideal, and the principle of living for the sake of others, in every sector of society.

We have always honored individuals who applied these principles in their spheres of professional life, appointing them as Ambassadors for Peace. Many parliamentarians around the world have been appointed as Ambassadors for Peace and they work closely with UPF and other affiliated organizations of our movement.

In addition, I recently inaugurated the Sunhak Peace Prize to honor individuals and organizations who have dedicated themselves to serving the well-being of others and future generations. The first Sunhak Peace Prize was presented in August 2015, and the second prize will be awarded in February 2017.

When I spoke at the United Nations in Vienna in May of last year, 2015, I called for a spiritual awakening. The member states of the United Nations should not merely follow their national interests. Each member state should seek to serve the whole purpose, the larger purpose, looking beyond national self-interest. When we observe the world from God's point of view, we see the world from a larger perspective. No matter what our field of endeavor—priest, parliamentarian, or professor—we should be committed to and guided by universal moral and spiritual principles. Whether we are the mayor of a small

town, the pastor of a small church, or the president of a nation or the secretary general of the UN, this is our eternal responsibility. This is the responsibility of each parliamentarian gathered here.



In the year 2000, my husband and I spoke at the United Nations in New York, calling on the United Nations and the member states to consider an innovative proposal, namely, that the United Nations build within its system an interfaith council, consisting of religious, spiritual and moral leaders who could advise, collaborate and deliberate with the representatives of the member states. Such a council could serve as the voice of universal values and principles.

The UN emerged in the World War II era, more than 70 years ago. Whereas, there are UN Headquarters Offices in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, there is no such office in Asia, even though we are living increasingly in an Asia Pacific age. In many ways, the geopolitical, economic and social center of gravity of our world is shifting toward Asia. With this in mind, UPF and other affiliated organizations of our movement, are advocating for consideration of a 5th United Nations office to be established in Korea.

I hope you will reflect on this proposal. I believe a 5th UN Office on the Korean peninsula, perhaps in the DMZ, with support of both Koreas, would go a long way toward establishing peace on this peninsula and toward peace in the Asia Pacific Region.

In closing, I want to emphasize the importance of the role of parliamentarians. You represent the people. You are entrusted by the people with a great responsibility. If parliamentarians of the world join together in harmony and cooperation for the sake of peace, we can transform the current reality of our world, creating a world of joy, harmony and lasting peace. With this in mind I encourage you, on this day, to form the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace, centered on the principle of living for the sake of others, and centered on God, our Heavenly Parent. You are the representatives of the 7 billion people of the world. If you join together in this way, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

Let us work together to build a world of lasting peace.

Thank you for allowing me to share these words with you today. May God bless each one of you, your family and your nation.