

Religion's Mission for World Peace

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August 27, 1991

Little Angels Performing Arts Center, Seoul, Korea

Inaugural Assembly of the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace



Photo date unknown, Rome Italy

Respected and eminent religious leaders from countries around the world, distinguished representatives of worldwide religious organizations, scholars of religion, and all participants who are present here:

From the bottom of my heart, I welcome you to this historic inaugural assembly of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace.

In the Founder's Address at the first Assembly of the World's Religions, which was held in New Jersey in 1985, I identified three essential tasks for religious people. First, all religious traditions must respect each other and, at the very least, work to prevent conflict or war between religions. Second, all of us, as cooperating religious communities, need to serve the world. And third, in order to fulfill the mission of religion, we have to contribute to the development of world peace by means of an organization in which all religious leaders would participate.

At the second Assembly of the World's Religions, which was held in San Francisco one year ago, I called for the creation of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace. Today, with the cooperation of religious leaders such as you, and in the presence of representatives of religions from around the world, the Interreligious Federation for World Peace is announcing its historic birth.

Now is the time when all the world's religions ought to feel keenly a central responsibility for the realization of world peace and take action for this purpose. The future happiness of humankind cannot be achieved through the pursuit of economic prosperity alone, but by overcoming conflicts between ideologies, between cultures and between races through interreligious understanding and spiritual harmony. Therefore, the main theme of my message at this inaugural assembly of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace is the mission of religion in the establishment of world peace.

God's ideal of creation centers on true love and calls each of us to exist for the sake of others. The purpose of human existence is to realize an ideal family, society, nation and world through individuals whose mind and body are harmoniously united into one in the embodiment of this ideal. However, because of Satan's false love and self-centeredness, each human being has disharmony between mind and body. The family, society, nation and world, consisting of human beings characterized by such a contradiction, have troubles and dissensions that are the multidimensional amplification of this disunity and struggle that exists within the individual.

The democratic world has become increasingly individualistic and self-centered. This is what Satan

wants, and thus Satan is leading most of humankind toward damnation. In order to stop this decline, we cannot rely on left-wing or right-wing ideas alone. We need head-wing thought centered on true love, which transcends ideologies on both the left and the right. We need Godism, the teaching about the ultimate reality that human life is to be lived centered on true love.

Disunity in our society and world originated with Satan's false love creating discord between mind and body within individuals. Therefore, true peace begins with harmonious unity within individual human beings. This unity can result only from the experience of true love. The base for realizing the peaceful world is not to be discovered merely by seeking global solutions, but through individuals and families. Individuals whose mind and body are harmoniously united by God's true love and who go beyond Satan's dominion, and families formed by such men and women, become the delivery room for world peace.

The Human Fall, which came about through false love, created discord between mind and body. As a result, we experience disunity and struggle in our vertical relationships with God, our parents, our children, our students and so on, and in our horizontal relationships with our spouse, our siblings, our friends, our coworkers and so forth. Instead of being characterized by love, these relationships are distorted due to the confusion between the mind's desire to serve others and the body's desire to gratify the self. This discord can be seen in the value systems and worldviews that guide individual and social life. The confusion between mind and body extends to the confusion between religion and science, between idealism and materialism, and between the pursuit of facts and the pursuit of values.

According to the ideal of creation, mind and body unite within an ideal individual in response to God's true love. The world of the mind and the world of the body, which are extensions of the individual's mind and body, need to also come into a harmonious relationship. Religion and philosophy represent the world of the mind, and politics and economics represent the world of the body. Just as mind is in the subject-partner and leading position, and the body is in the object-partner position to harmonize with the mind, religion and politics ought to achieve harmony and unity in a subject-object partnership. Otherwise, the ideal society cannot be created.

What has been God's purpose in sending saints and prophets? God's desire is to educate all people about the Will of true love, by showing models of personality and lifestyle. In particular, God's Will is for the worlds of the mind and the body to unite in magnificent harmony centered on God's Will of true love. This requires educating rulers and leaders about the heavenly way and supporting them as they put it into practice.

However, as the body often does not follow what the conscience requires, many rulers have not recognized holy persons and saints, have not received their teaching, and have ignored their warnings. Who can take responsibility to solve the misery and evils in contemporary society: the confusion in values, moral corruption, drug addiction, terrorism, racial discrimination and other problems? Can politicians, using political power, completely solve such problems? There is a great responsibility and burden that accompanies the decisions and choices made by politicians. This is true especially in this age, when societies are more pluralistic than ever and are so internationally interdependent. When making an important decision, a ruler needs to humbly listen to the voice coming from Heaven and look for solutions through following the heavenly way.

We must repent that religions themselves, representing the world of the mind, have not fulfilled their responsibility for bringing about a peaceful world. Religions in their current state struggle to find the life force necessary for leading and purifying the world, and in fact are going against their original mission. Each religion needs to revitalize its internal purity and life force through God's true love, reform itself in a determined way, and develop harmonious relationships with other religions according to God's Will of true love.

Devotion to God and God's great Will of true love is the mission of each religion. As such, the prosperity of each religious organization alone cannot be the purpose of religion. God demands that we come to know His Will for saving the world and that we practice it in our lives. This is more important than studying scriptures or observing religious ceremonies. Religions, for too long, have failed to relate to the living God and to bear witness clearly. The God that I know has no attachment to the content of doctrines that are put together according to human logic. Since God is the origin and Parent of us all, God does not discriminate between races or between religions.

Therefore, religious believers need to completely follow God's Will of true love to realize the ideal world of peace and the salvation of all people. Given the contemporary reality, religious people should not lead comfortable lives. Instead they are supposed to go the way of a living faith, centered on true love and true-life energy, in conversation with the living God. This cannot be achieved in the prevailing atmosphere of religion today. Unprecedented change on a global level is needed, through the inspiring power of all religions joined together in a movement of a new dimension.

The hypocrisy of those religious people who were not sincere in their practice of God's true love has led to the proliferation of atheism. This world must be changed. Each religion has to make efforts to purify itself and to become the leading actor in a new movement of reform. All religions need to leave behind the pursuit of their own benefit and take up the cause of world salvation that God hopes for. They must stand on the front line in the effort to eliminate poverty, disease and crime in the world, becoming a bright light in this dark world of the Last Days, and therefore teach and guide leaders in every field, such as politics, economics and social work.

Respected religious leaders, following the direction of God's providence, I have been devoting all my energy to the work of reforming the world and restoring God's ideal of true love. Through the activities of the International Religious Foundation, the Assembly of the World's Religions, the New Ecumenical Research Association, the Council for the World's Religions, the Religious Youth Service, the Interdenominational Conferences for Clergy and the Youth Seminar on World Religions, I have tried to provide a model of interreligious understanding and harmony and a model of the practice of God's true love that religious people need to embody. I am doing my best for the sake of the ideal of world peace.

Today I announce the publication of *World Scripture*, completed after five years of cooperative effort among scholars of religion and after review and endorsement by leaders of the world's religions. *World Scripture* will become a shining light, a volume of holy scripture that puts together the universally valuable contents of the world's religions. In particular, it will become a precious textbook for educating the younger generation, who are to live together as one global family. It will teach them to be able to overcome barriers between religions, between races and between cultures. Through this text, all people will free themselves from religious ignorance and self-righteousness, and realize the fact that religions have shared values that serve as a universal common base, and that what they share is of greater significance than the differences that have historically divided them. I thank those scholars and editorial board members from each religion who worked for the publication of *World Scripture*.

Following this inaugural assembly of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace, which represents the world of the mind and stands in the subject-partner position for world peace, the International Federation for World Peace, which represents the world of the body and stands in the object-partner position, will be inaugurated. Leaders from every corner of the world are arriving for this event. If these two organizations, harmoniously cooperating internally and externally, practice unity through true love in accordance with Heaven's Will, then the peaceful world will be realized. When the unity of religion and politics, representing the unity of mind and body, comes about through God's true love, the world of peace will soon follow.

When we sincerely reflect on this age, we come to know that now is an urgent time that demands not only faith but also practice and action. The world's problems, including such miserable struggles as racial wars and religious wars, which have come about through the spread of atheism, hedonism, secular humanism and the distortion of true religiosity, are extremely serious.

In Western societies there is a tendency to take life easy, especially now that communist atheism has lost ground. This tendency, however, comes from a superficial assessment of the situation, founded on ignorance about the essence of the problems that we face. If a new awakening movement of true love centered on God does not occur throughout society, the fall of contemporary civilization, whose center has been Western society, is coming, and that outcome will bring more misery than we can imagine.

The world as it is now cannot be left to its own devices. There is no time. Who can take responsibility for this generation? Military leaders? Politicians? New social engineers? We, representing the religions, must take that responsibility. I ask for your active cooperation. When, through the movement of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace, historical religious traditions harmoniously advance in practice toward world peace, they will lay the firm spiritual foundation for guiding the world, and help complete the ideal of peace centered on God's true love. When all religions of the world move in one direction, the peace of a united world will come.

I pray that God will protect the future of the Interreligious Federation for World Peace and all of you representing the world's religious traditions. May God bless each of you and your families. May you become the people of true love who can bring peace to the world.