

Interreligious and International
Federation for World Peace

FOUNDER'S ADDRESS

**ASSEMBLY 2000:
RENEWING THE UNITED NATIONS AND
BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE**

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August 18, 2000 Conference Room 2
United Nations Headquarters New York

Ladies and gentlemen, honored guests, and respected leaders!

Today, in this beautiful and solemn building where the United Nations General Assembly meets, I greet you with deep gratitude for the opportunity to express my passionate concerns and views about the future direction of the world and the United Nations.

The sole purpose of all my undertakings in many areas over the past forty years has been the realization of a peaceful world that is the desire of God and humanity. This longing for a peaceful world has also been the core reason I have dedicated myself to the promotion of interreligious harmony and cooperation.

In the twentieth century, humanity has experienced many severe conflicts and unspeakable acts of violence, especially through the horrors of the two world wars, and through the seventy years of the Cold War and communism. When the Cold War ended, the world had a brief moment of celebration, as if peace had arrived. But, then, very soon humanity realized that the end of the Cold War did not automatically mean the advent of an age of peace. Even at this moment, fierce wars and brutal massacres are going on in numerous places around the globe.

Conflicts arise for many reasons. But one of primary factor contributing to their emergence is the deep-rooted disharmony that exists among the world's religions. Therefore, when we witness the many global tragedies occurring around us, we should recognize how critically important it is that the religions come together, dialogue with one another, and learn to embrace one another.

In the modern age, in most nations, religious ideals have come to hold a place wholly separate from the centers of secular political power, and most have come to accept this reality as the way things ought to be. I believe, however, that it is time that international organizations whose purpose is to support the ideal of world peace reconsider their relationship with the great religious traditions of the world.

On this point, the United Nations, more than any other international organization, can set a good example and lead the way. The world has great expectations for the United Nations as an organization embodying humanity's aspiration for peace. In the United Nations, the representatives of all nations work in concert to promote peace and human prosperity.

Of course the conscientious efforts to establish peace, undertaken by these national representatives at the United Nations, often meet stubborn resistance. The accomplishments and achievements attained through the United Nations have been significant. However, there is much room for improvement. I believe there is an urgent need today, within the United Nations and through its many activities, to encourage mutual respect and increased cooperation between the world's political and religious leaders.

The original ideal for human beings is that we live with our mind and body united in resonance with God's true love. It is because human beings resemble God as His sons and daughters that the mind and body of each individual can truly unite without struggling against each other. Within God there is no disharmony between internal and external characteristics. This is so because the absolute God has no contradiction or conflict within Himself.

The human ideal to achieve oneness of mind and body can be realized only when people completely possess God's true love. The biblical verse, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God," illustrates this point. Peacemakers are persons whose mind and body are in unity centering on the true love of God.

As a result of the fall, human beings lost the standard by which our minds and bodies could be brought into oneness and harmony, and humanity has lived in internal strife and self-contradiction. The clashes of the mind and body within the individual have expanded and now manifest themselves in the family, society, nation, and the world. For example, this unresolved struggle between mind and body is what precipitated the elder brother Cain's murder of his younger brother Abel.

All the conflicts and wars in history have been essentially battles between a Cain camp relatively tending towards evil - and an Abel camp - relatively tending toward goodness. Humanity must end these struggles between Cain and Abel camps and restore the original state of harmony and love.

To do this, each of us must end the conflict between our mind and body, and bring them into harmonious union.

The principle that mind and body must be united should be applied and practiced not only by individuals, but it should be applied on the worldwide level. For this purpose, I founded a number of organizations to achieve world peace. For example, I established a number of interreligious initiatives, such as the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace, to promote cooperation among religions, which represent the internal world of the mind. Also, to address the external management of human affairs, representing the body, I have worked to promote harmony among nations through the activities of The Federation for World Peace, the Federation for Island Nations for World Peace, the Federation for Peninsula Nations for World Peace, and the Federation for Continental Nations for World Peace. Most recently, signifying the emergence of an era when mind and body, or religion and rational governance can work together: cooperatively, I founded the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace.

At their root, human problems are not entirely social or political, and so social and political approaches will always be of limited effectiveness. Although secular authorities rule most human societies, religion lies at the heart of most national and cultural identities. In fact, religious faith and devotion have far greater importance in most peoples' hearts than do political loyalties.

The time has come for religion to renew itself and manifest true leadership in the world. People of faith should feel responsibility for the plight, suffering and injustices experienced by the world's peoples. Religious people have not been good examples in the practice of love and living for the sake of others and for this reason should engage in deep self-reflection. It is time for religious people to repent for their preoccupation with individual salvation and narrow denominational interests. Such practices have prevented religious bodies from giving their utmost to the cause of world salvation. Our age more than any other demands that we go beyond faith, and the interests of particular religions, and put our love and ideals into practice for the sake of the world.

In particular, God calls upon us leaders - especially religious leaders - in hope that we will stand against the injustices and evils of the world, and bestow His true love upon the world. Hence, all people of faith must become one in heart in order to give full expression, in both words and actions, to God's passionate desire for humanity's restoration and peace.

World peace can be fully accomplished only when the wisdom and efforts of the world's religious leaders, who represent the internal concerns of the mind and conscience, work cooperatively and respectfully with national leaders who have much practical wisdom and worldly experience about the external reality or "body." In this light, it is time for us to give serious consideration even to the prospect of restructuring the United Nations. For example, perhaps it is possible to envision the United Nations as a bicameral institution.

The existing United Nations structure, composed of national representatives, may be regarded as a congress where the interests of each member nation are represented. However, I submit that serious consideration should be given to forming a religious assembly, or council of religious representatives within the structure of the United Nations. This assembly or council would consist of respected spiritual leaders in fields such as religion, culture, and education. Of course, the members of this interreligious assembly will need to have demonstrated an ability to transcend the limited interests of individual nations and to speak for the concerns of the entire world and humanity at large.

The two chambers, working together in mutual respect and cooperation, will be able to make great advances in ushering in a world of peace. The wisdom and vision of great religious leaders will substantially supplement the political insight, experience and skill of the world's political leaders.

Even at this moment, more and more conflicts are breaking out across the world over disputed borders. As a result, the world is sustaining substantial loss of human life. In addition, the money poured into war-making and peacekeeping runs into the billions of dollars. So many resources and efforts are being wasted. Yet, comprehensive solutions have not been fully achieved with respect to any given conflict.

To solve this problem, I would like to make some proposals for your consideration:

Peace Zones

I propose today that the United Nations and religious leaders join their hearts and work to create peace zones in areas of conflict. Whether the disputed borders pass through rivers, mountains, fields, or the sea, we can create buffer zones or peace zones along these borders.

These zones could be governed directly by the United Nations and people from around the world dedicated to the establishment of peace will be allowed to settle in these zones. The United Nations will be responsible to provide guidance to those living in these areas so that they come to embody the founding ideals of the United Nations and comply with its declarations for peace. These peace zones will be havens that exist for the sake of peace, prosperity, and reconciliation. They will be free of racial and sexual discrimination, human rights violations, and war. These areas must also be ecological and environmental havens for the entire natural world.

To create such zones of peace, freedom, and ecological harmony, the concerned nations will have to be willing to provide the necessary land. This is not a simple matter, for there will be resistance to the surrender of land, even for a peace zone. I have dedicated much effort toward finding solutions to this problem, particularly as it applies to my native land, Korea.

I have taught that there is a providential significance to Korea's having been a victim of the Cold War. As you know, both the division of Korea and the war that followed are outgrowths of the Cold War. The Korean War, in which the youth of sixteen countries shed their blood under the United Nations flag to protect freedom, was a righteous war unprecedented in history. I remain ever grateful to the United Nations and those sixteen nations. And yet, the peaceful unification of Korea still remains to be accomplished. For this reason I have continually pondered about the United Nations' solemn mission for building a world of peace and how this relates to God's providence.

I sincerely hope that the current mood of reconciliation and cooperation between South and North Korea, which began last June, will continue. I hope the entire demilitarized zone along the 155-mile military demarcation line that crosses the Korean Peninsula can be turned into a peace zone under UN jurisdiction. I believe the United Nations will take the lead in this effort and build exhibition halls, museums, educational sites, and peace parks in this zone in order to teach visitors important lessons regarding peace.

I am purchasing almost 1.2 million hectares of fertile land in South America's MERCOSUR countries to help compensate countries for any land they may lose as a result of the establishment of UN peace zones. I have already notified leaders of North and South Korea that I am prepared to turn over to them portions of that land in South America for their use.

As I make this proposal public, it is my fervent hope that world leaders of good will can understand this purpose and join with me. In particular, I hope that they will join me in willingly donating their land and money for use in creating UN supervised peace zones. These zones, under UN leadership, will give rise to ideal moral societies where nature and people live in harmony.

Already in December 1998, I proposed the founding of an international Peace Fund in an address I gave to world religious leaders gathered for an international conference that had as its theme, "Realizing the Interfaith Ideal: Beyond Dialogue into Practice." All the leaders who participated in this conference resolved to initiate a movement for the world's religious people to lead the way in making donations for world peace. I proposed that donations we given in amounts related to the number seven. Because various individuals and countries face differing economic realities, one person may find it difficult to give even seven dollars, whereas someone else may be able to give even \$7 million. I believe that if all religious people on earth become one in heart, they will actively participate in this fundraising effort. The funds thus created will be used to establish peace zones and to teach the ideals of peace and the methods to achieve it. In addition to religious people, the United Nations too can encourage all nations and their peoples to make annual contributions to this fund. These funds might be donated under the name of the "White Cross Fund."

Wealthy philanthropists, business leaders, and industrialists, leaders in other fields, along with individuals, and organizations, can actively participate in the construction of UN peace zones. In this way, they can lead the way in creating an atmosphere of peace and in raising the necessary funds.

An Interreligious Council at the United Nations

Furthermore, one of the reasons I founded the Interreligious and International Federation of World Peace was to help create an interreligious assembly to serve as a senate or council within the United Nations. To implement this plan, I propose that each nation, in addition to its current ambassador, can send a religious ambassador to the United Nations to serve as a member of the religious assembly, or UN senate.

The mission of the representatives to this UN senate requires that they have a genuinely ecumenical or interreligious consciousness and that they have the training and ability to teach a universal, trans-national ideal of peace. The nature of their purpose and mission would prohibit their promoting the narrow interests of a particular country. Rather they are to carry out their duties for the ideal of peace in the world and for the sake of all humanity in accordance with God's Will.

The interreligious ambassador appointed as a member of the United Nations senate or council should have a global consciousness and take responsibility to represent the United Nations' global vision and agenda. In this sense, these persons can be thought of as global ambassadors from the United Nations. Wherever they go in the world, these ambassadors will promote movements dedicated to the realization of peace and social welfare. Moreover, in all nations, they will serve as conscientious guardians of lofty ideals such as justice, security, and peace.

This will provide hope to the citizens of the world, and especially the youth. People will then have the opportunity to see with their own eyes the emergence of young people around the world seeking true love and lasting peace. Those selected as ecumenical and transnational ambassadors will also be able to help guide and supervise various UN sponsored projects in health, education, welfare, and other fields.

Commemorating Ideals of True Love, True Parents and True Families

I have worked through many groups and organizations to educate people around the world in the meaning and value of true love and true families, transcending religious denominations and nationalities. By use of the term "true" I mean centered on God's original will and purpose. My continuous investment in this area and ongoing efforts for dialogue and reconciliation over the last decades have demonstrated beyond any doubt that the strongest foundation for the unity of humanity is the universal and essential love generated through the ideal of the true family.

Based on these considerations, I urge all the organizations connected to the United Nations to act in order to uphold and promote the ideals of true love and true families. For this reason, I would like to make another proposal - that the senior decision-makers at the United Nations proclaim, in accordance with existing procedures and regulations, a special day to be commemorated worldwide. I understand that the United Nations has made proclamations such as the International Year of the Family, and that it has declared various ten-year objectives such as the "Decade to End Poverty." Along these lines, I propose that the United Nations establish an official commemorative day to uphold the ideal of the family, so that the world can remember and celebrate this day every year.

Specifically, I propose that True Parents' Day be established as a day of global celebration. I have already initiated such a day that has been signed into law by the United States Congress. Each year, in America, model parents and families from throughout the nation are honored. By celebrating such a day each year, transcending barriers of race, religion, and cultural differences, and loving and cherishing each other, we will be able to fully experience our true and common human roots, and understand the preciousness of true families. This day will be a special of truly global commemoration and a beginning of the celebration of the oneness of the world, as one global family, leading us beyond all confrontation and strife.

Respected world leaders, we must join hands and hearts and improve our systems and organizations so that the precious wisdom of religion, along with scholars, statesmen, and people of insight and knowledge, can be mobilized to solve the serious and urgent crises of the world.

I believe solutions to world problems can come about if we establish the proposed council composed of religious leaders in cooperation with the political leaders and diplomats of the current United Nations. The Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace will promote this ideal, for religion can offer great service in providing guidance in matters concerning the Absolute Being, the world of transcendence, our eternal life and the spirit world. For this purpose, the IIFWP will make devoted and sacrificial efforts to attain the goal of world peace. It will strive to establish the Kingdom of Heaven of eternal love and harmony and the fatherland of God, where the United Nations' efforts for peace are honored, and where all humanity form one universal family as brothers and sisters under God, the Parents.

I believe that the world leaders and officers of the United Nations, who possess knowledge, experience, and wisdom, can offer many recommendations for implementing the proposals I've presented to you today. If we work together and make continuous efforts, peace and happiness will surely be realized on Earth.

I pray that God's blessing be with your families and your endeavors. Thank you.