

Let Us Lighten True Mother's Burden

Umberto and Marilyn Angelucci
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*Umberto Angelucci Regional President
for the Middle East*

What do we leave behind and what do we take with us?" were the words of wisdom given by Dr. Young Taek Yang at a ceremony to express appreciation for his leadership, on April 8 this year at the Middle East regional headquarters in Istanbul, Turkey. He continued, "We leave behind our legacy and we only take with us true love."

Dr. Yang will be moving on after three years of total dedication to the providence in this region. We are proud to come on the foundation of his dedication and that of all those that have come before him who demonstrated great loyalty to the Middle East mission.

As we held our first Middle East leaders meeting at the time of this appreciation ceremony, we were able to meet some

of the saints and sages of the Middle East. Being in the presence of people of such wisdom, which they had cultivated through countless years of working in the field serving our True Parents, was such an amazing experience. What incredible testimonies they have; these are the treasures they will leave behind as their legacy. Our members who have served in the region over the last forty-five years have built a remarkable foundation of sacrifice and service.

Now is the time to bring fruit here. Through listening to the many experiences and testimonies to the projects and programs that had been held over the years in the Middle East, that our True Parents invested greatly in the region in the past became obvious. We had held numerous seminars for Muslim leaders and scholars, organized frequent interfaith programs throughout the region, administered and sponsored many humanitarian and service projects and brought hundreds of religious leaders from all over the world to visit the holy lands and dialogue about peace and harmony. Our True Parents have invested so much into this rich and diverse area. We are so happy to be back in the Muslim world. After five years of working in Afghanistan and then four years in the Philippines, we are so honored that True Parents trust us to serve in the Middle East. The only solution to the problems in the Middle East is the precious truth that our True Parents have given to us. Our work in Afghanistan was proof of this. We could see first-hand the effect of our True Parents' message on the young people of Afghanistan and now we have tremendous hope to see the same result in the Middle East.

When we first went to Afghanistan, seeing the way that God wanted us to work was not easy. We tried many avenues and found that the young people were open to the way of peace. As Dr. Yang reminded us, we ought not to have concepts. God has only one concept -- we are one family under God.

As one result of our work in Afghanistan, at present we have four Afghan students studying at our college in the Philippines, the International Peace Leadership College. They are learning the ways of peace leadership and preparing themselves to go back to their country and to serve a higher purpose as true peacemakers. We want to give this opportunity to young people from the Middle East, so they can develop themselves and gain the tools they need to substantially contribute to their own societies in the future in a way that can make a significant difference. Islam is a religion of peace, but the historical and political situation of the region has taught the young people an unfortunate lesson of conflict. Young people need the tools to create a culture of peace that our True Parents' philosophy of peace can provide.

Many may think that to be assigned to the Middle East is to be given a burden or a difficult task, but to us it is an opportunity to serve on another level. Our True Mother is concerned about the problems of the Middle East and through her motherly heart she wants to see changes take place. At a time of great challenge in the providence, this is a chance for us to demonstrate our absolute faith in our True Parents. We see this assignment as a wonderful opportunity to bring hope to our True Mother. If somehow we can take some of our True Mother's burden off her shoulders and possibly bring a smile to her face, it will be worth any sacrifice or trial we may face. As our True Mother told us, it is time for the harvest and we believe it is time for harvest in the Middle East as well.