FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Michael Balcom on The Kingdom Within

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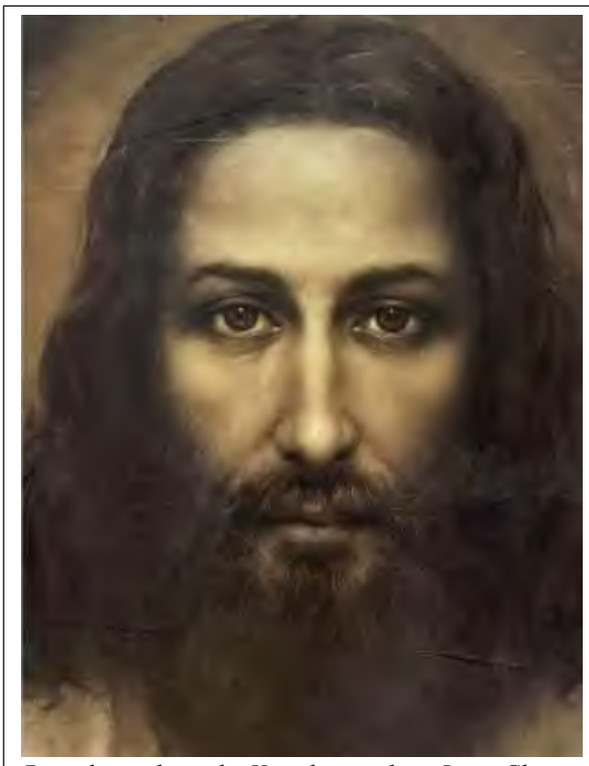
. Michael Balcomb speaking in the River South branch of the Family Federation in London on September 20, 2026

From expectations of an external kingdom to discovering the kingdom within when providential hopes remain unfulfilled

The Kingdom Within

Part 1 of a sermon by Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in Europe and the Middle East, given online at an international Sunday worship service for the Nordic countries on Zoom 20th September 2026.



Preaching about the Kingdom within: Jesus Christ, here recreation of Christ as depicted in the Shroud of Turin, showcasing the intricate details and historical significance of the burial cloth associated with the crucifixion of Jesus. Author: Shroud of Turin

See part 2: The Inner Kingdom and the Outer Kingdom

My topic this morning is "The Kingdom Within". And my scriptural reference is Luke 17:20, which is a very well-known scripture. There are actually two distinct translations that I will refer to. The first one is the King James Version:

"When he was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, the kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say see here or see there. For indeed the kingdom of God is within you."

The New International Version is slightly different:

"Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, the coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say here it is or there it is, because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Both translations are possible from the Greek, ἐντὸς ὑμῶν, entos hymon. To put it simply, "within you" points to the personal and internal realm, while "among you" (or in your midst) points to the community and social space.

The second reading is from True Father, and he is really talking about this issue of the internal and external:

"The unification of heaven and earth and of the cosmos are not the biggest problems. These are decided by the achievement of mind-body-unification. If my own mind and my body are still fighting, what do I gain by the world becoming one? Where would I go in such a world?"

And finally, a reading from True Mother, from Champumo-ron 2 [The second book of a two-volume series published in 2025, composed of excerpts from True Parents' messages and arranged by topic]:

"The people of Israel, who were living in difficult circumstances, expected that the Savior and Messiah promised by heaven would appear in splendor. They believed that when the Messiah appeared, the things they were longing for would happen instantly and the course of history would change. They thought Israel would rise up and Rome would collapse through miraculous events. But things did not unfold that way."

Now, I was reading this passage from Champumo-ron this week and I suddenly thought to myself,

"Gosh, just change a couple of words here, and this would apply to us today: 'The people of Unificationism expected that the kingdom would come in splendor, that things would change. But it didn't work out that way.'"

Looking Back: Providential Deadlines and Crises

Sun Myung Moon speaking at the Washington Monument rally on 18th September 1976

On Friday we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Washington Monument rally. I was there, by the way. When we had the Washington campaign, it was very intense. I was just a young member. I'd been a member for about four months, and we met at Belvedere [in Tarrytown, New York] every Sunday morning, and Father gave us really intense speeches.

Father in those days was speaking in very eschatological terms: "The Kingdom is coming now," "This is the time of transformation." If you read the Washington Monument speech, you'll see that Father was speaking about the 200th birthday of America as being the turning point of the battle between good and evil.

There was no doubt in our minds that the Kingdom of Heaven was coming soon. We had a certain sense of a providential deadline. For me, since that's when I joined what is now called the Family Federation, I thought that was normal - to work on a strict providential deadline.

Later on, I learned that this mindset was not new. Actually, eight years before, when True Father came to Washington D.C. he met a group of members with a burning question. The first members who joined the Unification Church in America were almost all very spiritual. And they all believed to a man (and woman) that the kingdom of God would be coming in two or three years because one of the first

missionaries to America, Lady Young Oon Kim, had told them that.

Dr. Young Oon Kim (Kim Yeong-oon), here in the Summer of 1956 in Seoul

That time period had already expired. So when they assembled in Washington D.C. to meet True Father for the first time, they were not happy campers. In a meeting before Father arrived, a few of them - we're talking maybe about 10 or 12 people - cornered Young Oon Kim, and they challenged her,

"Hey, you said the Kingdom of Heaven was coming by 1967. It's not here. What happened? Have you been lying to us?"

Young Oon Kim (1914-1989), a great theologian in her own right, said,

"Yes, I did tell you that. And I told you that because that's what Father told me."

So of course they thought, "Right, we're going to see where this ends up." They said, "We want you to ask Father why he told you this when he must have known as the Messiah that it wasn't true."

The next day they were meeting and Father gave a talk. And then he asked for questions. And Young Oon Kim stood up and said,

"Yes, Father, I have a question from the American members. They want to know why you were lying when you said the Kingdom of God was coming last year." (She might not have said exactly those words, but Koreans do speak their mind!)

And Father said:

"Yes, I did tell you that. And I told you that because that's what God told me. God told me the Kingdom of God was coming last year, and it didn't. And I'm living with that as well. And I'm asking you to join me, for as long as it takes."

I mention that story because now, 50 or 60 years later, our movement arguably faces its greatest crisis ever. I hear a lot of members asking candidly,

"What's going on, Mike? Our movement in Japan is dissolved, and in Korea it is on the brink. True Mother's in prison. And our organizational structure seems to be in disarray. Where is the Kingdom? Where is it? Tell us!"

Because we all joined a movement that was promising the Kingdom of Heaven, and we don't see it, I think that's a very reasonable question. And True Mother's confinement - tomorrow marks a full year - makes it even more pertinent.

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The Inner Kingdom And The Outer Kingdom

September 24, 2026 • The News Desk

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The inner kingdom is essential, but it was never the final goal – it must become an outward reality

The Kingdom Within

Part 2 *of a sermon by Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in Europe and the*

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Continued from part 1: The Kingdom Within

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Detail from Duccio di Buoninsegna (1255-1319) – Christ Accused by the Pharisees. Photo: Web gallery of art. Public domain image.

Word in Defense of the Pharisees

I want to go back again to Luke 17, with the Pharisees demanding of Jesus to tell them when the Kingdom is coming.

I'm going to be a little controversial here. I'm going to put in a good word for the Pharisees. Normally they get the short end of the stick, in that we portray them as a monolithic group of hypocrites who wanted nothing more than to trip Jesus up and trap him. There might have been some Pharisees like that, of course, but the reality is the Pharisees and Jesus shared a lot in common – similar beliefs in the Kingdom of Heaven, the spirit world, the resurrection of the dead, and the authority of Scripture.

In those days, it was natural to ask really robust questions. In educated Jewish society, vigorous questioning and challenging was not a sign of disrespect; it was the norm to "argue for the sake of heaven" to find the truth. Actually, even today, if you go to a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem, you will hear what sounds like a riot going on with people arguing with each other at the top of their voices.

This tradition, started by Rabbi Hillel [See editor's note below] might well show the fact the Pharisees asking these demanding questions was a way of showing that they were taking him seriously. Jesus sometimes criticized their motivation, or the barriers they set up for themselves and others, but he never said they asked too many questions. And this was a very legitimate concern because the people of Israel were oppressed and occupied by Rome. Everyone wondered "Where is the Kingdom?"

The Two Courses: External and Internal

To be clear, Jesus' response "The Kingdom of God is within you [or among you]" didn't please anybody at all:

- **The traditionalists** didn't like it because they spent a lot of time in prayer, purification, and devotion, believing in a supernatural intervention from heaven in response.
- **The Zealots** – the freedom fighters who believed Rome could be overthrown by physical force and unified politics (probably Judas Iscariot was a zealot) – didn't like it because it sounded too other-worldly.
- **The common people** didn't understand it either. On that particular day, they might have liked it, but a few days later during the last week of Jesus' life, they were calling for his crucifixion. They were starving and suffering and didn't want to hear that the Kingdom was within them.

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Jesus preaching about his plan A. Illustration: ChatGPT, September 2026.

And I think we're like that today, right? We don't want to just be told the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, or it's in our midst, when we can see that the world is really not like that.

Let's remember that at the beginning, Jesus talked about the Kingdom coming in no uncertain terms. Both he and John the Baptist proclaimed, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" The *Divine Principle* makes it very clear that this was Jesus' primary course, and that the failure of people like John the Baptist and other religious leaders contributed to the Savior eventually going the way of the cross.

More recently, through the *Champumo-ron [a two-volume series published in 2025, composed of excerpts from True Parents' messages and arranged by topic]*, True Mother has emphasized another important fact: that Jesus should have married and become the True Parent. Both agree that this led to the tragedy of Jesus dying on the cross.

Where we differ from the traditional Christian view – all those millions and millions of people who call us heretics – is that Christianity came to believe that the cross was plan A all along, and that the people who blocked Jesus were in some way just acting out the destiny of God. But Jesus contradicted that view when he said, "Woe to the man by whom offense comes. It would be better if they had not even been born."

The external, earthly Kingdom was always plan A. It was the cross that was plan B.

The Danger of Escapism and the importance of all Three Blessings

And you may ask,

> "Then, is this theological pivot to the idea of a 'Kingdom within' actually just a way of coping with a harsh and inconvenient reality? We didn't see the Kingdom of Heaven come, so let's be satisfied with the internal kingdom?"

No, that's not the meaning.

However, it is certainly true that without internal, personal change, nobody can live in a Kingdom of peace, regardless of the external circumstances. That's why people with good fortune – like winning the lottery – often end up miserable. That's why Father said: – and we always quote it – *"Before seeking to dominate the universe, seek to dominate yourself!"*

Sun Myung Moon in September 1965. Photo: FFWPU

Mother puts it a slightly different way:

Mother Han speaking in South Korea. Photo: FFWPU

"I'll be more grateful today than I was yesterday, and I'll be more grateful tomorrow than I was today."

However, neither Father nor Mother ever said that was enough. Both insisted that the goal of life was to build the Kingdom of God on earth, in substance.

To be continued. Part 3 coming soon.

Continued from part 1: The Kingdom Within

***Featured image** above: Dr. Michael Balcomb speaking online from London 20th September 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by FFWPU*

[***Editor's note**: Rabbi **Hillel the Elder** (c. 110 BCE–10 CE) was one of the most influential Jewish sages of the late Second Temple period. A leading teacher and legal scholar in Jerusalem, he founded the **House of Hillel**, a major school of Jewish interpretation. His teachings emphasized compassion, ethical conduct, humility, and careful interpretation of the Torah. He was a contemporary of **Shammai**, whose school often differed with his.

Hillel's teachings later became foundational to **rabbinic Judaism** and provide important context for understanding the Jewish world of Jesus. The teachings of Rabbi Hillel provide an important Jewish context for understanding some sayings attributed to Jesus rather than treating them as ideas emerging in isolation. Hillel is particularly interesting when studying the **historical Jesus**, because he was a prominent Jewish teacher living around the same period. There are some striking parallels between sayings attributed to Hillel and teachings attributed to Jesus.]

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