

Mother of Peace
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes
A Memoir by Hak Ja Han Moon
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One street, one global neighborhood

On the southern Japanese island of Kyushu, there is a small port city named Karatsu. This city on the shores of the Korea Strait is famous for the pottery that bears its name. Karatsu

pottery was originally created by Korean potters. During the 1980s, key members visited this city several times on our behalf to develop an international project. Karatsu was the launching site for an initiative that my husband had announced at our International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences in the autumn of 1981 - the construction of an international peace highway circumscribing the globe.

The vision is for a high-speed transportation artery linking the entire globe. On the day of its completion, much of our world will become one village linked by one road. The process of constructing the highway itself provides the world's peoples and governments a common purpose. The transnational lines of commerce and recreation that open up will stimulate inter-ethnic exchange of culture and goods and draw us to live in harmony as neighbors.

That highway would pass through a tunnel connecting Korea's Busan with Karatsu, and there, in 1986, we commenced a pilot tunnel construction. I had long been interested in visiting the site. Finally, in 2016, I had the opportunity to go and see it. During my visit, I renewed our movement's commitment to the peace highway. I believe that the world's peoples are ready for this and that the time is ripe for launching the project based upon a global plan. To tell this story to the world, from the streets to the senate buildings, I had already created an affiliated project, "Peace Road." It consists of public activism publicizing the international highway, and it has turned into a global movement for peace. I'll share more about Peace Road later.

Regarding construction, the biggest challenges are those of crossing the spans of ocean that separate Alaska from Russia and Korea from Japan. The divides between those territories are both physical and spiritual, and the joint commitment to building a road uniting them will represent important steps toward peace for the human race. Of course, it is not an easy task. Since the dawn of human history, there has been no greater engineering and social challenge. Yet I know that it is possible and that it represents the ultimate task that must be accomplished in our era - the harmonious cooperation of all peoples and governments. Attitudes that persist based on the tormented history between Korea and Japan are a huge obstacle, and they give rise to opposition to the tunnel. But we have to forgive, forget and set our minds on the positive outcomes. An undersea tunnel connecting Busan in Korea with Karatsu in Japan will boost our respective abilities to contribute to the global economy. The anchor cities of Karatsu and Busan will become hubs for global trade, linking the Eurasian continent to the Pacific region. The tunnel will unite these two nations' cultural assets, both traditional and cutting-edge, for global tourism. Most importantly, its construction will plant the roots of peace in Asia. And cooperation between these two countries will serve as a model for Heaven healing the wounds of conflict and hostility felt in nations and among peoples throughout the world.

The reality is, however, that these two nations pursue their own interests. I encourage their leaders to think about England and France, who waged wars against each other for a century yet joined hands to build the Channel Tunnel that connects them together. If the Korean and Japanese peoples open their hearts and accomplish genuine forgiveness and reconciliation, we will see the Korea-Japan Peace Tunnel built in our time. This tunnel will not just symbolize, but realize, humanity's future based not on fear but on hope.

My husband and I therefore prayed that constructing this tunnel as part of the peace highway would create a low-pressure area on the Korean Peninsula, into which the high-pressure areas surrounding the peninsula to the east and west would converge to bring unity on the peninsula. Looking at a map with a motherly heart, I feel as if the island and continent long for each other, and the peninsula is where they meet.

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The second major challenge for the International Peace Highway is that of crossing the Bering Strait between Russia and the United States. That location will prove to be even more challenging than the Korea Strait. The Bering Strait once represented the ideological divide between the democratic and communist camps as the United States and Russia grappled with each other. Connecting these two nations is a vital step toward global peace and unification.

I want everyone to be able to travel the International Peace Highway by car or even bicycle from Cape Town to Santiago, from London to New York. I want taking a trip with your sweetheart through any country around the world to be as easy as visiting your hometown. One end of the highway will be the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa; the other end will be Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America. It will cross the Bering Strait to link the African continent and Eurasia with the Americas. From the perspective of this highway, Korea will be the midpoint. By Heaven's grace, the birthplace of the True Parents, for whom humankind has long awaited, will be at the very center.

Many people question how we can accomplish such a formidable task. Yet history shows that all great achievements have come amid difficulties. If it is the will of God, there must be a way. We already have the engineering prowess to construct a bridge-tunnel complex spanning the Bering Strait. Concerning the cost, we need to put it in perspective. Compared to the money that the world is investing in wars that do nothing but destroy nations and people, the cost of a bridge-tunnel constructed for the sake of peace is insignificant. Nations and movements sacrifice lives and resources following the logic of power - a foolish and ineffective way to resolve perceived injustice or settle disputes. Our Heavenly Parent is showing us the path of true peace. As the Book of Isaiah says, now is the time to beat our swords into plowshares. I have mentioned the Peace Road project. It consists of events in which people of all ages and nationalities, wearing Peace Road tee shirts and carrying a Peace Road flag, ride bicycles or walk to show their support for our proposed International Peace Highway. Their path ends at local government centers where officials and social and religious leaders speak at rallies, publicly announcing their support for the initiative and stimulating publicity in local media. Leaders and citizens of many countries, including members of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace, have welcomed the Peace Road movement. In 2015, people in more than 120 countries participated. All together, the peace riders that year symbolically traversed the world in 93 days.

Bold love breaks an iron curtain

With the coming of the year 1990, people were feeling hopeful that the world might truly change. I would hear one person saying, "The term 'Cold War' will soon no longer be heard," and another responding, "That may be your hope, but the Soviet Union is holding on, and communism is gaining power in many countries. Peace cannot be so easily achieved." They would agree on one point - it won't be easy.

In the late 1980s, with American conservatism on the rise, the Solidarity movement generating success in Poland, and glasnost and perestroika progressing in Russia, the world was entering an era of reconciliation, at least on a superficial level. But at the same time, Moscow-directed insurgencies were building momentum in Africa, Asia and Central America. Moscow had succeeded in forcing the United States to pull out of Vietnam, allowing communism to run rampant there and in the killing fields of Cambodia. Marxists were still bent on their ambition to communize the entire world.

At that time, my husband and I sponsored the World Media Association fact-finding tours, taking Western journalists to see firsthand the conditions in the Soviet Union and other communist states. Informing journalists with indisputable facts was an effective step toward ending the Cold War. Besides taking the blinders off these journalists' eyes, the tours generated positive relations with Russian media. In addition, we welcomed the teams from communist countries during the 1988 Seoul Olympics, serving them with Korean food and gifts. On that foundation, my husband and I decided to go to Moscow to meet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

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Seventeen years earlier, on July 1, 1973, we had declared that one day we would "march to Moscow." As we fought to overthrow communism, we had envisioned holding a rally in Red Square, and in October that year we announced this to our members. Most were enthusiastic, though the prophecy reminded some of the dream-like visions of Don Quixote. Sunburst, one of our church bands, turned our vision into a song, "Red Square," with the immortal refrain, "Must Go to Moscow!" Although the accomplishment of that goal took longer than we wished, my husband and I never forgot our commitment. We believed that winning the Soviet leadership's heart in Moscow's Kremlin Palace would tip the scale toward liberating God and all of humanity.

Our Victory Over Communism work over the years was ultimately not about a political system, nor was it a public relations strategy to gain support from anti-communists. At its root was, and is, the question of

"God or no God." The real purpose of our struggle is to liberate the communist world - and the West as well - from atheistic materialism. During the Cold War, most people in the free world, including the journalists on our fact-finding tours, had no idea what life was like under communism. Others in a position to know chose to turn a blind eye, hesitating to take action out of fear. In the meantime, hundreds of millions in the communist world endured dire circumstances, some not knowing where their next day's food would come from. To save these suffering millions, our Heavenly Parent pushed my husband and me to win over the Soviet Union - and opened the path by which we could do so.

Engaging the leadership of the Soviet Union was certainly no simple task. President Gorbachev had been implementing gradual reform, but he had to deal with an entrenched bureaucracy programmed to maintain a belligerent posture as the leading nation of the communist world. Hidden behind an Iron Curtain, the Soviet Union projected the image of a powerful, iron-fisted empire.

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A few days before we departed for Moscow, my husband and I sat down to discuss our plan with senior members of the Unification Church. Some of them tried to dissuade us, arguing that it was too dangerous for us, as notable opponents of communism, to walk into the communist stronghold. No one could derail my husband's and my determination, however. Nonetheless, my husband, recognizing the seriousness of the matter, was considering the future. As he looked into the face of each and every one there, he said something unexpected: "It's time to decide who will lead the movement when I am not here."

All voices were silenced. Again he looked at the church leaders, one by one, and then spoke with care and gravity. "Even if I am not here, it is fine as long as Mother is present."

His statement conferred on me the serious position of co-founder of the Unification Church. Everyone was surprised at what Father Moon was saying, but I just listened quietly. Having accepted the mission of God's only begotten Daughter and Mother of peace, for 30 years I had done my utmost to help my husband at the forefront of God's providence to save and guide the world. Now he had made it clear that Heaven's authority is equally with father and mother, husband and wife. It seemed he was making the announcement at that moment in case anything unfortunate happened in Moscow.

Later, Father Moon decided to share the same message with thousands of New York area members who had gathered to honor the 1990 Parents' Day with us. In his keynote address, he set into the public record that which he had stated to our leadership. There in the New Yorker Hotel, he declared, "Even when I am alone, I represent True Parents. And the same goes for Mother. When she is alone, she represents True Parents. Now there is nothing to worry about. Fundamentally I am the first founder of the church and Mother is the second founder. Until today, women have followed men, but from now on, they are on a horizontally even footing."

This was not a one-time statement from my husband. At a meeting on June 14, 1991, True Father proclaimed his gomyeong at Clearstone Deer Park Lodge in Canada, in the presence of representative Japanese women leaders. The gomyeong is a final decree a king leaves for his subjects before passing away. In this proclamation, my husband declared that after his ascension, I would continue our God-given mission and that the Japanese woman leaders should take responsibility to support me.

On November 27, 1994, at Belvedere Training Center in New York, Father Moon again announced my public mission as the movement's second founder. At that time, the educational program for 160,000 Japanese women and significant events in certain nations had concluded, so my role was expanding. On that day, I resolved in front of members, "Let's all pledge to become the family that will unite and establish the traditions of the True Parents."

In April 1990, a few days after that Parents' Day celebration, my husband and I, with our eldest son Hyojin, arrived in Moscow. The venue was the 11th World Media Conference and the 1st Summit Council for World Peace, sponsored by the World Media Association and the Association for the Unity of Latin America (AULA). During the conference, President Mikhail Gorbachev invited the participating world leaders to the Kremlin Palace. I was the only woman included on the invitation list and was treated very graciously. My husband and I awarded President Gorbachev the Grand Cross Medal for Freedom and Unification, which was presented by Ambassador Jose Maria Chaves, Chairman of AULA. We held President Gorbachev's hand and offered a simple benediction: "God bless you, Mr. President."

Of course, it was absolutely unacceptable under the communist regime to pray for God's blessing in the office of the president of the Soviet Union, the epicenter of the ideology-driven atheist state. Nonetheless, President Gorbachev was warm with us and struck a friendly tone in our chat after the prayer. "Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon," he remarked, "I do like your traditional Korean dress. It looks beautiful on you."

I answered with a smile, "The First Lady Raisa always looks beautiful, too! Women all over the world respect her. I'm looking forward to the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Gorbachev tomorrow at the Little

Angels' performance. My husband told me you are a handsome man, and I can see it's true." Through our conversation the atmosphere became friendly. President Gorbachev's smile was truly warm and bright; I had the impression that we all were flying on the clouds. I thought, "This is the power of prayer and the hand of God."

As the meeting went on, my husband did not hesitate to advise President Gorbachev. "The success of the Soviet Union depends on whether you put God at the center or not," he said, and he was emphatic: "Atheism will lead to nothing but self-destruction and disaster." Father Moon told President Gorbachev that the only way for the Soviet Union to survive was for Russia to continue his economic and political reforms and to allow freedom of religion. President Gorbachev's face showed he was well aware of the enormity of Father Moon's advice, yet he could not help but receive what we said. Never before had anyone said anything like that in the Kremlin. Looking back, I feel confident to say that the words we exchanged at that moment changed the history of the world. I truly felt that heaven and earth were listening to every word with bated breath.

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Our meeting in the Kremlin and the overall conference created heavenly energy, and our movement's fortunes in the Soviet Union began to advance. President Gorbachev's confidence in my husband and me, and the Unification Church, increased by the day. It is amazing that, after that, the Soviet government would allow more than 3,000 Russian students and professors to travel to the United States for Divine Principle education. It was revolutionary.

The next year, a coup d'état took place in Moscow and instability ensued for a short time. President Gorbachev's efforts for political reform and openness had stirred up a reaction among the communist elite. The president was placed under arrest at his residence on the Crimean Peninsula. The insurrection lasted for three days and failed. Inspired by the road to democracy that President Gorbachev had pioneered, the people, especially the young, arose in Moscow in his defense, with Russian President Boris Yeltsin taking the lead in organizing the resistance. Those protestors, surely among whom were many we had educated in America, were the driving force in bringing Gorbachev and Yeltsin together, dissolving the Soviet Union and ending the Cold War. President Gorbachev's open-hearted reception of the prayer, "God bless you, Mr. President," that my husband and I offered in his office surely brought him a stroke of heavenly fortune.

I must add that all this would never have happened were it not for the work of the "butterfly missionaries" of our movement from Europe. Called to this mission, they had departed from their own countries and entered the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as underground representatives of True Parents. The fall of the Soviet Union was the climax of God's invisible plan for which these faithful people had set conditions at the risk of their lives. Through a complex interweaving of events, each of them played a role in bringing about the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the shift toward democracy. Even today, they continue to pray and work for religious freedom and social progress in Russia on its path forward.

The year after our meeting with President Gorbachev, the Soviet Communist Party was disbanded and what I thought of as a frozen kingdom melted into the mists of history. During the 70 years since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, as communist governments took control of a third of the world's population, the blood of hundreds of millions of people had been shed. At long last, the Soviet Union lowered its red flag, its atheistic worldview discredited. When the Soviet dictatorship declared its own demise, the communist assertion that progress takes place through class conflict, struggle and hatred, was revealed as totally false.

History will show that my husband and I were skating on very thin ice when we entered the Soviet Union to meet President Gorbachev, and that this meeting took place at exactly the right time. In declaring that the world's only hope is a God-centered worldview, we played a decisive spiritual role, and the world's political landscape was forever changed.

An enemy becomes a friend

In 1946, the year after the restoration of Korean independence, Father Moon was arrested while evangelizing in North Korea. The police accused him of being a spy for South Korean President Syngman Rhee and locked him in the Daedong Detention Center in Pyongyang. His captors severely tortured him and threw what they thought was his dead body out onto the snow. His followers found him and in grief began preparing his funeral. Of course, Father Moon did not die. He clung onto life and, with the help of their prayers and herbal medicines, astonishingly, he revived.

A year later, Father Moon was arrested again and incarcerated in Hungnam special labor camp under a regime of forced labor at the nearby Hungnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory. For two years and eight months, he suffered indescribable hardships. It was an environment in which most prisoners died of malnutrition and physical exhaustion within six months.

As this was taking place, my mother and maternal grandmother also were imprisoned by the communist police for our religious beliefs and practices. They were released after much hardship. I have already recounted our separation from the rest of our family, our escape in 1948 with the help of my uncle, and our arduous journey to the South.

Over the subsequent decades, the North Korea government continued to treat us as its enemies. My husband and I had been carrying out Victory Over Communism activities throughout the world, and we received information that North Korean leader Kim Il Sung wanted to assassinate us. Our members' seven-day public fast and prayer across the street from the United Nations in 1974 publicized the plight of Japanese women held captive in North Korea. In June 1975, shortly after the fall of Saigon, we held the World Rally for Korean Freedom, which brought over 1.2 million people to Yoido Plaza in Seoul to stand strong against communism.

With neither fear nor anger, my husband and I prayed ceaselessly for reconciliation between North and South Korea. We were not responsible for the division of the Korean Peninsula, but we took responsibility for its peaceful reunification. We have always felt that ending the conflict on the Korean Peninsula would turn the world toward peace. Hence, after returning from our meeting with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, we decided that we would have to meet Chairman Kim Il Sung of North Korea. We set a goal: by the end of 1991.

For more than 40 years, my husband and I had been unable to return to our hometowns. Through the 1980s, we taught our principles in every corner of the world, but we couldn't go to North Korea, which is only an hour's flight from Seoul. It was the same for all displaced Koreans who had ended up in the south after the Korean War. Nothing can alleviate the longing and anguish that results from the inability to visit one's hometown, especially when it is so near. Nonetheless, the reason my husband and I wanted to go to North Korea was not to visit our hometowns and relatives, even though we missed them dearly. In fact, the experiences we had been through in the North would lead most people never to want to set foot there.

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The determination we made to go to North Korea seemed an impossible dream. North Korea would not even allow groups of journalists from the West to enter. But we continued our sincere prayers of forgiveness and reconciliation, and had our members reach out to North Korea in any way possible, believing that God could make a way out of no way. In answer to our prayers, in mid-November 1991, while in the United States, a courier brought us a sealed invitation. We opened it in private. Addressed to us personally, it stated that Chairman Kim Il Sung was inviting us to visit North Korea.

Without informing our staff of our ultimate destination, we packed our clothes and departed for our church workshop center in Hawaii. Our family and personal staff were curious. "It's warm in Hawaii," they said. "But you are packing winter clothes!"

Arriving in Hawaii, my husband and I lived at the workshop site and concentrated our minds in prayer. Before setting foot in North Korea, we had to resolve any painful feelings knotted up in our hearts. We had to forgive Kim Il Sung, whose regime had hurt the nation and world, not to mention our extended family and ourselves. If we had thought of him only as our enemy, we could not have forgiven him. Only in the position of his parents, only with the heart of his mother, could I forgive. To save her son sentenced to death, a mother will even seek to change the laws of her country. That is what the maternal heart is like. With that heart, I pledged to forgive my enemy. I did not pray for our safe return from North Korea.

Those were serious hours in which we offered endless prayers. Just as Joshua circled Jericho seven times, we went around the Big Island of Hawaii again and again, offering our sincerest commitment to Heaven. Only after we had dissolved all the buried pain did my husband and I inform those who needed to know that we were on our way to North Korea.

Those around us expressed the natural reactions. "You are going to the place that is controlled by your enemy. It's extremely dangerous, completely different from going to Moscow. There is no Western or South Korean embassy there; no protection whatsoever. Whatever the letter said, there's no way Kim Il Sung will allow you to enter, unless he's planning to keep you there forever."

Though spoken out of concern for our well-being, such words tempted us to dwell on our private feelings and fears. Yet we knew that we had to truly forgive North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and embrace him with unconditional love, no matter the risk. We identified with Jacob offering everything he had, going at the risk of his life to meet with his brother Esau, who intended to kill him. After enduring 21 years of indescribable hardships while maintaining sincere devotion to his brother who hated him, Jacob gained the heavenly wisdom necessary to win Esau's heart. To change an enemy into a friend is truly impossible without the heart of a sincere parent.

A few days later, with our minds clear and hearts resolved in unity, my husband and I, with a small staff, flew to Beijing. As we were sitting in the airport waiting room in Beijing, a North Korean representative appeared and handed us an official invitation. The document carried Pyongyang's official seal. On November 30, our group headed to North Korea on Choson Airline's special aircraft, JS215, sent by Chairman Kim. For our benefit, it flew over my husband's hometown, Chongju, before landing in Pyongyang.

As the plane passed over Pyong-an Province, where both my husband and I were born, we looked down on the Cheongcheon River, in which we both had played as children. I felt as if I could reach down and touch its blue ripples. Had that river been flowing peacefully during the sorrowful four-plus decades since our territory was recklessly torn apart?

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The chill of the cold winter wind we felt as we disembarked at Pyongyang Sunan Airport dissipated as we received the embraces of my husband's relatives. Of course, they all were grandmothers and grandfathers. They grabbed hold of our hands and wept. A waterfall of tears surged in my heart, and I'm sure my husband's as well, but I bit my lip and held them back. We had committed ourselves to this venture for the sake of Heavenly Parent and the world, not for the personal happiness of our relatives or ourselves. There would be another trip for that, we assured each other, casting our bread on the waters.

We settled in at the Peony Guest Hall, and the next day, in accord with our lifelong tradition, we arose early in the morning and prayed. If there were surveillance cameras in our room, all those prayers crying out for the unification of the Korean Peninsula were recorded. That day and the next, we were given a tour of Pyongyang.

Our meeting with a group of major North Korean government leaders at the Mansudae Assembly Hall on the third day of our stay has become a legend in North Korea. My husband and I knew that to speak for God and against the government's "Juche" ideology in North Korea could be grounds for execution, but we were resolved to risk death for the sake of peace and unification. Let it go on record: Standing in the heart of North Korea, Father Moon denounced Juche thought and the Juche kingdom. He said loudly and clearly, "The unification of North and South Korea cannot come based on Chairman Kim Il Sung's Juche thought. North and South Korea can be unified peacefully, and Korea can become the nation that can lead the whole world, only through the God-centered ideology and 'head-wing' thought of Unificationism." Furthermore, he refuted their propagandist posture that the Korean War started with the South invading the North. By the end of his speech, Father Moon admonished them, "How can you call yourselves leaders? You cannot even control your own sex organs!"

The North Koreans were taken entirely by surprise. Their security personnel were anticipating the signal to rush in with guns drawn. Even though they to some degree knew what Father Moon was planning to say, our members accompanying us broke out in a cold sweat.

I had toured the whole world with my husband, and we had met the leaders of many nations, but nowhere did we have to maintain courageous determination and serious resolve comparable to that day in Pyongyang.

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Father Moon's speech went far past the schedule for lunch and everyone ate at separate tables in dead silence. Many thought that the chances of meeting Chairman Kim had just evaporated. My husband said it didn't matter; he had said what he came to say.

On the sixth day, Chairman Kim sent two helicopters to transport us to Chongju, Father Moon's hometown. As Chairman Kim had instructed, highway crews had newly paved the little road to my husband's boyhood home, set up dignified tombstones and planted turf at the graves of his parents. They even had painted and decorated the house where Father Moon was born and spread sand on the earthen floor and yard. We visited his parents' tombs and offered flowers.

I gazed at the sky in the direction of Anju, my hometown, 18 miles away. Is the old house that embraced me so snugly still standing there? Is corn growing in the backyard field these days? Where is my maternal grandfather's grave? I was curious about everything, but I held it inside. We had come to meet with Chairman Kim Il Sung on behalf of our Heavenly Parent, and to shape the future of our homeland. We had come for the sake of the nation and world. I could not entertain my personal feelings in light of that historic summons. I was there so that the day would come when all Koreans and all peoples will be free to visit their hometowns.

It was on the seventh day that we finally met Chairman Kim. As we entered the Chairman's white-stone official residence in Majeon, Hamgyongnam Province, he was waiting for us. Without regard to protocol, my husband greeted Chairman Kim as if they were old friends, and Chairman Kim reciprocated, and we

all took a deep breath as the two joyfully embraced each other. Chairman Kim, seeing me in a traditional Korean dress, politely gave his welcome.

The first order of business was lunch, and while we ate, we began our conversation by unreservedly sharing small talk about such things as hunting and fishing. Gradually, Father Moon and I introduced our current activities, including the World Culture and Sports Festival planned for the coming August. Hearing that it would include a Blessing Ceremony for 30,000 couples from around the world, Chairman Kim offered the Myeongsasimni Beach in North Korea's beautiful Wonsan district, where the sweetbriar is beautiful, as its venue. He also promised to open the port of Wonsan to transport all the couples to that site. Then all of a sudden, there were so many things to talk about. The conversation took on an energy of its own and continued far beyond its scheduled closure. My husband embraced his enemy, whom he had been preparing for decades to meet, with deep and intense love.

Chairman Kim was impressed by our sincerity and accepted our proposals in a bright manner throughout the meeting.

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At that time, visitors from the free world visited North Korea at the risk of their lives. Communists hate religion, and my husband and I were co-founders of a religion. In addition to that, we were leaders of a global movement to end communism. Our trip to North Korea was not for the sake of joint economic ventures. We didn't go with a duplicitous motive, feigning interest in North Korea's benefit while actually being there for our own benefit. Such is typical of the political world, but that was not on our minds. For the sake of genuinely following the providential will, we went only with the heart of God, to enlighten and lovingly embrace the communist leaders and open the way for genuine unification. We entered that land relying only on God and advised its supreme leader to receive Heaven's decree.

While in North Korea, even though we were honored as state guests, we could not sleep comfortably, knowing that there were thousands upon thousands of families separated and longing for each other because Korea was not yet unified. We stayed awake every night, seeking to connect heavenly fortune to that place through our heartfelt prayer. We spent those nights submitting ourselves to God, for the sake of the unification of the Korean Peninsula. Political negotiation and economic exchange will come only on the foundation of the true love of God. By making this our focus, our talks with Chairman Kim opened a new chapter for the unification of North and South Korea.

Looking back, I reflect that it was at the moment communism reached its zenith that my husband and I risked our lives to go to Moscow and Pyongyang. With joyful hearts, as representatives of the free world, we embraced enemies who had severely persecuted us. By our doing so, they were moved, and we could reconcile. Thus, we laid the foundation for unification and peace. We went to North Korea not to get something but to give genuine true love. For the sake of God, my husband and I forgave the unforgivable; for the sake of humanity, we loved the unlovable.

Soon after the completion of our eight-day mission, North Korea's Prime Minister Yon Hyong-muk led a delegation to Seoul and signed a "Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" with the South Korean government. Over the coming months, our movement set up an industrial enterprise, the Pyonghwa Motors factory, as well as the Botong River Hotel and the World Peace Center, all in Pyongyang, as the cornerstone for unification. Afterwards, the seeds planted by my husband and I at that time bore fruit with the visit of the South Korean president to North Korea to discuss the path toward unification. On that foundation, the shoots of peace and unification are growing. When those shoots blossom into full bloom, the earnest prayers my husband and I have offered for Korean unification will be remembered forever.

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After our meetings with President Gorbachev and Chairman Kim, my husband and I mapped out our next steps. We envisioned God-centered organizations that would fill the vacuum about to be created by communism's demise and undergird effective peace-building. With the tangible menace of militant communism now fading, the reformation of religious faith and family-based morality was the next mountain to climb.

It had taken more than 50 years to sweep international communism into the dustbin of history, but the decline of religion and family life is a subtler and, therefore, more pernicious threat. Religious leaders are tasked by God to guide people to live responsibly, but the influence of religion in modern times has been declining. Our challenge now became the restoration of religious faith as society's compass.

Thus we intensified our investment in bringing religious leaders to see beyond their denominational horizons, end interreligious conflict, and work together based upon universally shared, God-centered values. These are the same absolute values around which we called scientists, media professionals and

political leaders to work. Healthy societies of all races, nations and religions arise on the foundation of morality and ethics, which in turn arise on the foundation of the love of God between husband and wife, parents and children. This love of God in the family is the source of absolute values, values that are universally shared and taught by all religions. We inspired faith leaders to work together and teach these universally shared values. We actually have invested more of our movement's resources on this than on the growth of our church.

Our vision brought together religious leaders and government leaders, centered around a common purpose of peace and true freedom. Renowned people from all walks of life who empathized with our objectives became "ambassadors for peace" through the work of the Federation for World Peace and the Interreligious Federation for World Peace. Starting in 2001, in Korea, the activities of these peace ambassadors quickly spread throughout the world. Inspired by this vision, peace ambassadors in 160 countries are putting down roots of true peace through project work in a broad range of fields. Where there are disputes, where poverty hinders education, where there is religious intolerance, where people lack sufficient medical care, peace ambassadors alleviate their pain and help them improve their lives.

Then, at New York City's Lincoln Center on September 12, 2005, we inaugurated an umbrella organization, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF). Following that event, my husband and I embarked upon a tour of 120 nations to meet ambassadors for peace and establish UPF national chapters. UPF brings together people and organizations across the world through programs supporting the realization of a world of genuine peace.

The Universal Peace Federation is now an NGO in General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), where its representatives work with like-minded, peace-loving global citizens.

A United Nations peace garden

"I did not learn to yield. I did not learn to kneel." These bold declarations are spoken in the epic Korean film, *The Great Battle*, by one of Korea's famous military heroes, Yang Man-chun, Lord of Ansi Fortress. The 2018 film, seen by millions of people, depicted the true story of how Yang Man-chun and the soldiers and people of the Ansi fortress-city held off the Tang Dynasty's army of 500,000 men for 88 days in AD 645.

The Ansi fortress was the final bulwark of the failing Goguryeo Dynasty against the powerful and fearsome Chinese invaders. Yang Man-chun was not fully allied with Goguryeo General Yeon Gaesomun, but as Ansi fortress commander, he invested everything to unite his people despite suffering, hunger and death. They ultimately forced the Chinese to retreat and saved the fortress.

This is just one of many stories about the brutal foreign invasions the Korean people have endured. We have been able to protect our beautiful mountains and rivers for millennia because of our patriotism and willingness to sacrifice. As True Parents, Father Moon and I uphold the Korean Peninsula as the land where all civilizations will blossom and bear fruit.

Nonetheless, the unfortunate 70-year history of division in Korea continues because the ideological barrier between democracy and communism still takes precedence over the love of family and clan. Parents, children and siblings both north and south have had to live for decades without knowing whether their family members are alive or dead - even in the era of the internet. The line of lamentation that divides the Korean Peninsula and separates blood relatives is a geographical line, but that is superficial. The real division is over worldviews and values. It is the fierce confrontation between atheism and theism, over the question of whether or not God exists.

Father Moon and I have invested sincere devotion and great effort to end the Cold War and unify North and South Korea. Beginning in 1968, we spread the Victory Over Communism (VOC) lectures throughout Korea and around the world to reveal the falsehoods of communism. In the 1980s, our members developed VOC materials into the CAUSA Manual and gave CAUSA lectures on campuses, in conferences, to students of all ages, pastors of all faiths and social leaders in all fields. The newspapers we established globally, such as *The Washington Times*, provided accurate information about the tensions on the Korean Peninsula and the reality of life under communist governments.

As I just described, in 1990 we provided the spiritual energy for President Gorbachev to continue on his path of reform, which led to the abandonment of communism as a structured global power. And our meeting with Chairman Kim Il Sung opened the gates of exchange for the sake of unification between North and South Korea. Since then, the UPF has expanded to more than 190 countries, serving as another foundation upon which the international community can cooperate in and benefit from the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

And yet it seems to me that the new generation of South Koreans do not understand how the Korean War

arose and why the unification of our people is necessary. Therefore, today, I am working even harder for this cause. This is one purpose of the Peace Road activism. As a culmination of the Peace Road events in 2015, riders in Korea cycled to the Imjingak Pavilion, located north of Seoul at the Imjin River, which divides the Koreas. From that site, they could see the demilitarized zone (DMZ) and North Korea. The participants created a dramatic moment by singing in Korean the song, "Our Cherished Hopes Are for Unity."

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All Koreans feel a deep gratitude to the United Nations. Were it not for the United Nations, the Republic of Korea would not exist. When the North Korean People's Army, with Soviet backing, invaded South Korea on the morning of June 25, 1950, their ambition was to communize South Korea. They might have succeeded, as Korea was a small, poor country whose name was hardly known to the wider world. But the United Nations swiftly called on its member nations to defend democracy on the Korean Peninsula, and 16 countries sent troops while others sent medical support. The UN forces fought hard, risking their lives in an unfamiliar land to protect freedom and peace.

At that time, as I mentioned above, my husband was confined in a death camp, sentenced to hard labor at the Hungnam Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory. He was freed soon after the UN forces landed at the port of Incheon in September 1950. They pushed their way up into the northern part of the peninsula as far as the city of Hungnam. The prison camp guards were killing all the prisoners, but the night prior to my husband's scheduled execution, the guards learned about the approaching UN forces and fled. Heaven surely was behind the UN Security Council's decision to send a multinational force to turn back the communist invasion. The ultimate reason for the UN peace-keeping action was a hidden one, to save the only begotten Son and protect the only begotten Daughter. In accordance with God's will, our lives were preserved.

Why would God have protected our nation, the Korean people, in that historically difficult and troublesome crisis? The world was just recovering from World War II, and now it plunged into another tortuous battle on a global scale. The fact that our national anthem includes the words, "May God protect and preserve our nation," points to the answer: It can be explained best in terms of God's providence.

To complete the providence, in 1943 God sent His only begotten Daughter, the first woman who could receive God's first love since the Fall of Adam and Eve, to Korea. As do all people, this only begotten Daughter had to grow to maturity. She needed time until she could recognize, understand and accept her responsibility for the salvation of humankind. A child cannot simply go out and lead the providence. That is why God protected His only begotten Daughter until she grew to the age when she could know Heavenly Parent's mind, feel Heavenly Parent's heart, and determine with her own will to own Heavenly Parent's mission.

God preserved the environment of religious freedom for the sake of the fulfillment of Jesus' final words in the Bible, "Surely, I am coming soon." Jesus and the Holy Spirit called and led the only begotten Son and only begotten Daughter to complete the mission of the Messiah as the True Parents of humankind. To protect this mission, Heaven guided the UN forces to enter the war to defend freedom.

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The United Nations established its headquarters in New York City at the end of World War II. Seventy years have since passed. There are three other major UN offices, in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. But even though the world has entered the Asia-Pacific era, there is no major UN office in Asia.

I have recommended that the UN open its fifth international office in Korea, specifically, in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) on the 38th parallel. I am supporting various groups, including the Universal Peace Federation and the Citizens Federation for the Unification of North and South Korea, in their efforts to turn the DMZ into a global peace park. This will bring the issue of Korean reunification to the attention of the world's people as no other action can.

All the nations of Asia would be pleased to serve as the site of a new, global UN headquarters, but I believe that Korea has unique qualifications. It houses the international headquarters of the Universal Peace Federation and of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace. Spiritually speaking, as the nation in which True Parents were born, Korea has something very deep within its culture that can serve the world.

Some 70 years ago, the UN forces shed blood and sweat for the sake of peace in Korea. By ending the division on the peninsula, the UN would complete the mission of those soldiers who gave their lives, and inspire peace in the world. In his speech given at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2000, my husband announced our vision of a peace park in the Demilitarized Zone. Fifteen years later, in May of 2015, at the UN Office in Vienna, Austria, I proposed that a fifth UN office be built there. The

president of the Republic of Korea himself proposed to North Korea at the UN that a peace park be built in the DMZ. If North and South Korea invite the UN to build its fifth office in the DMZ, it will, by that very act alone, turn a theater of war - where so many on both sides of the conflict shed their blood - into a Mecca of peace.

Putting peace into practice

In our peace messages, Father Moon and I advocated that all humanity participate in the cross-cultural marriage Blessing. The cross-cultural marriage Blessing is by far the best way to restore humanity to become the children of God. Grandparents from enemy nations or religions will unite through the beautiful grandchildren they share in common. That is the ideal, and like all ideals, it takes work to realize. In Korea, one hears, "There are more and more multicultural families, but their lives do not appear to be getting easier." The person next to him agrees, saying, "Many children are ridiculed by schoolmates because their mother is from another country." "Not only that," another person will chime in, "It is not uncommon for brides from overseas to give up and return to their native countries."

Today the number of multicultural families is increasing in the Korean countryside as well as in the cities. Looking closer, we can see that these multicultural families generally comprise a Korean husband and a wife from a developing country and their children. It is not easy for women from other countries to settle in a land where the people have a different language and lifestyle. Added to that, more than a few locals look down on multicultural families and even reject them.

I understand such problems very well. When my husband and I went to the United States in the early 1970s to carry out our mission, I experienced rejection and a sense of isolation that comes from being part of a minority. If this was the case for me in America, a nation with a heterogeneous population, it must be even worse in Korea, a homogeneous nation. Hence, I hope and desire to support these families who have come to establish happy lives in Korea.

Since the late 1960s, my husband and I have created multicultural families through the marriage Blessing Ceremony, introducing partners to each other beyond nation, race and religious background. An upsurge in multicultural families in Korea was especially seen after our International Blessing Ceremony for 6,500 Korean-Japanese couples in 1988, the year the Summer Olympics was held in Seoul.

At that time, there were not many Korean women willing to marry men in farming villages, and this was becoming a social problem. For our Blessing Ceremony, women from Japan and other countries agreed to marry Korean men. Everyone knew this would pose many challenges. The Korean people's sentiment was still strongly anti-Japanese and many opposed the idea of a Japanese wife or daughter-in-law in Korea. Similarly, in Japan, parents were unhappy with the idea of their daughters - or sons - marrying someone from Korea, which was less developed economically.

However, Japanese Unificationist women, understanding faith in God, the concept of filial devotion and the idea of "living for the sake of others," agreed to marry Korean men and devoted themselves to their families. Brides from countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand similarly came to Korea and established international blessed families.

There were many beautiful outcomes. The women attended their Korean parents-in-law with sincere devotion and created prosperous families. Even if living conditions were difficult, they faithfully took care of their husbands' parents when they were sick and elderly. Some even received government awards for serving their parents-in-law with filial devotion. Some became leaders of women's associations or parents' groups in their villages. Many of these wives and their husbands are now indispensable members of their village communities.

My husband and I realized there were ways to assist not only our church members, but all women in multicultural families in Korea, and we established a Multicultural Welfare Center in 2010. The center helps people from foreign countries learn the Korean language and otherwise feel at home in Korean society. Furthermore, we are assisting disabled people and single-parent families. We set up the True Love Peace School in Korea for the children of bicultural families, to help them with their studies and language skills.

We sometimes hear about Korean celebrities or high-ranking officials whose sons evade the requirement to join the military. That is not the case with multicultural families; in fact, some predict that by 2025, South Korea will have a "multicultural army." Children of international and multicultural families often have dual citizenships, and they can opt out of Korean military service by choosing their alternative nationality. Notably, more than 4,000 sons of couples who received an international marriage Blessing have fulfilled their national military service in Korea with honor. This is something they can be proud of.

Melting Korean prejudice against multicultural families will take time, so we must work hard to see the day that the term "multicultural family" disappears. Discrimination is implicit in that term. A family is a

family; no modifier is needed to describe it. "Multicultural" should not be used to label a married couple in which the man and woman are of different nationalities. This is not in line with a universal understanding of humankind nor with God's will.

For more than 50 years, Father Moon and I have been promoting harmony between nationalities, races and religions through the marriage Blessing. Through Korean-Japanese marriage Blessings, we have broken down the barriers between these two nations and their peoples. We have done the same between Germany and France, and many other people of former enemy nations. The brides and grooms who have received the marriage Blessing are living based on the word of God and creating beautiful families all over the world. We do not call them multicultural families; they are simply blessed families.

It seems ironic, but the ultimate goal of religion is to create a world where there is no religion, in the sense of religion being a repair shop. When all human beings become good people, there will naturally no longer be a need to repair our relationship with God. In the same way, when we become "one family under God" and a world of true equality and peace appears, the term "multicultural family" will disappear. The very foundations of that peaceful world are true families and true love.

As we have seen, the road to one world has many dimensions. It is a literal road bonding nations together; it is an embrace of enemies who become brothers; it is turning a war zone into a peace garden, and it is the uniting of men and women of diverse races into literal marriages that recreate the world as one family under our Heavenly Parent. As the Mother of peace, I am calling the world's near eight billion people to travel this road together with me.