

## Let Us Bring Religious Harmony for the Sake of World Peace

Sun Myung Moon

August 14, 1984

Lotte Hotel, Seoul, Korea

The Fourth Conference on “God: The Contemporary Discussion” and The Third Youth Seminar on World Religions

(Given on Father’s Behalf)



*Photo date and location unknown*

Honorable chairperson, distinguished scholars and clergy, participants in the Youth Seminar on World Religions, ladies and gentlemen:

Welcome to Korea, the site of the fourth conference on “God: The Contemporary Discussion” and the third annual Youth Seminar on World Religions.

It is very appropriate for the God conference and the youth seminar to convene together here in Korea. Korea has historically been a unique meeting place of the world’s religions. Buddhism and Confucianism are deeply rooted in Korean society, maintaining harmony with each other in the context of the native Korean Tan-gun tradition and traditional Korean folk belief. This year, 1984, marks the two-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Catholicism and the one-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Protestantism in Korea, which brought about the flourishing of Korean Christianity.

Within the culturally homogeneous Korean society, tremendous religious coexistence and cross-fertilization have developed, and the precepts of these diverse religious traditions are embedded harmoniously in the people and society of the “hermit kingdom.” From this soil has emerged the Unification movement, seeking unity within diversity on the worldwide level, striving to establish a world of love, empathy and harmony based on the religious affirmation that all people are one family under our common Parent, God.

To create a world that resembles this ideal, we need an overall model or blueprint. An important Unification concept is that of a mature or perfected person, whose mind and body are united. The highest ideals and purposes spring forth from the mental and spiritual life of a person focused on God. The nervous system transmits the mind’s commands to the cells and relays information from the physical body back to the mind. When this exchange occurs smoothly we say that the individual is in harmony. The mental and spiritual life of humanity can be likened to the mind’s activity, and the economic life of humanity to the body’s functions. God’s ideals, aspirations and love manifest socially through religion. Theology, philosophy, art and all culture revolve around this religious essence; their substantial reality in the life of all people is their material base. Religious, theological and philosophical thinkers can be compared to a central nervous system, transmitting, interpreting and developing impulses from God to the whole body of humanity.

I consider religious leaders and scholars to be of crucial importance for the betterment of the world and for the creation of a new cultural revolution. Throughout history, such leaders have always been the vanguard of culture, in the rise of Christianity and the world of Islam, as well as during the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

Today, however, along with unprecedented success in the realms of science and technology, we have unprecedented problems as well. Religion often fails to speak to the real problems of the modern world, and those taking the lead in social change often act under the antireligious banner of communism. However, communism practices violence as a means for change; it ultimately denies God, turns against religions, and tries to limit and restrict our perspective to the material world.

I am aware that many supporters of communism have high ideals and are working beyond the scope of nationality, race and culture. However, their energy and idealism must be complemented by thought and action based on God. Therefore, the world needs religious leaders and scholars to be sacrificial pioneers. The God conference, the Youth Seminar on World Religions, and all the activities of the International Religious Foundation provide a forum and a structure to help fulfill this ideal.

As individuals, please renew your dedication and use your skills to help the world. As representatives of the world's religions, please bring your churches, mosques, synagogues, shrines and temples into a cooperative unity for the sake of world peace and human freedom, centered on God. Many people question what religions can do in this secular age. I answer that the world's religions need to provide a stable, universal foundation of values upon which governments can build true peace and harmony. They need to provide a global ethic that helps humanity fully utilize science and technology for the sake of happiness, and helps us lift up, purify and share the world's cultures.

The ideal I am espousing is nothing other than the kingdom of God on earth. I see it as a realistic goal toward which we can work practically step by step. Some people have been telling me that I am utopian. I recognize that I am extremely idealistic, but I have no alternative. God has called me directly, personally, to take on this task and responsibility.

I have been concentrating not only on teaching people about God's ideal; I am also promoting the accomplishment of that ideal on earth. For this purpose I have dedicated all of my efforts in areas such as missionary work, education, alternatives to communist ideology, the ecumenical movement and social services. Among these, I put the greatest emphasis on the ecumenical movement.

A major problem that humanity faces today is the lack of spiritual unity, both within Christianity with its various denominations, and among and within each of the world's religions. Despite all efforts to the contrary, divisions and animosities among various religious groups continue. Religious wars are still waged, as they have been for centuries. In spite of the various movements toward ecumenism, it remains true that religious arrogance, intolerance and bigotry are still prevalent among devout believers. Thus, although most religions have professed the same God and often even the same views for centuries, followers of those great religious traditions have continually persecuted and warred with one another.

We must realize that God is beyond denominationalism, doctrinal exclusivism and factionalism. God's purpose is, and always has been, to save the entire world, not merely a particular race, nation or religious group. As religious people, we cannot help God in the task of salvation when we sustain fighting and animosity among ourselves. Many religious leaders are aware of this; for numerous reasons it has been difficult to change that reality.

The essence of my teaching is that interreligious harmony is a necessary condition for world peace. No single religion has manifested God completely. Therefore, diversity and differences of religion have been inevitable. Yet, as many great religious leaders have taught, because we are all children of the same Heavenly Parent, we are all brothers and sisters of the same one great family, and interreligious conflict and divisive hatred are unnecessary.

In my years of spiritual search and struggle, I encountered God many times, and I also spiritually encountered the founders of all the world's great religions. I feel God's continual presence and inspiration every day of my life. Without God, how would it have been possible for a man born in an isolated farming village in a small, oppressed and destitute nation to now be able to sponsor and address this august assembly of the world's religious leaders? I testify that the teachings of the Unification movement, its goals and all its projects are the result of God's direction to me. They are not my personal theory and activity, they are God's.

The International Religious Foundation is planning to sponsor a Parliament of World Religions in 1993. That Parliament will commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in conjunction with the first World's Fair. Prior to the 1993 event, two preparatory meetings will be convened, one in mid-November 1985 near New York City, and the other sometime in 1989. Each of these gatherings will bring together more than seven hundred spiritual

teachers, scholars, lay leaders, artists and young people. It is hoped that the three planned events will lead to other such programs in the future.

The 1993 Parliament of World Religions and the two preparatory meetings are designed to provide a new environment for global ecumenical contacts. The objective is to move toward discovering the universal principles that underlie all life and to promote the fullest diversity of its possible expressions. In so doing, the Parliament will seek to advance and develop international peace and harmony for which the world yearns. Participants will be offered an opportunity to share their perspectives on our present spiritual condition and on the challenges of our present age.

The purpose of the Parliament will not be to legislate, either politically or doctrinally; it will be to promote mutual respect among the world's religions and to foster interreligious cooperation on projects initiated by them. The overall theme will be the renewal of spirituality and the establishment of world peace under God.

I thank you for your participation. I hope this conference will be centered not on human thinking about God but on God's original ideal. I truly believe that your studies and discussions will bring about tremendous progress in realizing God's ideal on this earth.

Thank you.