

## Grand Mufti of Syria sends 40 core followers to New York for 40 Day Seminar

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*True Parents and the Grand Mufti of Syria.*

Unknown to most, Unificationists had cultivated contacts within the Muslim world since the early 1980s. While conventional mission work was exceedingly difficult, the Middle East Times gave the movement a presence in the region. In addition, the Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA) held a series of six highly successful conferences that brought together Arabs, Israelis, Greeks, and Turks on a variety of topics. On the foundation of these meetings, the Council for the World's Religions convened several conferences of high-level Muslim religious leaders, including the grand muftis of Syria and Yemen.

As a result of several audiences with True Parents, the Grand Mufti of Syria agreed to send forty core followers to New York for a forty-day Inter-Religious Leadership Seminar (IRLS) that included three cycles of the Unification Principle, beginning December 2, 1990. The Grand Mufti of Yemen, along with forty participants from his country, took part in the second IRLS from April 21 to May 31, 1991. They were followed by separate Egyptian, Jordanian, Turkish and Sudanese groups.

These activities culminated on April 10, 1992, when forty-two Muslim couples took part in a Holy Marriage Blessing Ceremony in Seoul, Korea. True Father termed the participation of Muslims in the wedding "a miracle." In effect, it broke an interreligious barrier, enabling True Parents to extend the Blessing to people other than Unificationists.