

One Family under God and the World Peace Blessing

Everywhere in the world, in the teachings of every religion, it is recognized that the family is the institution which takes primary responsibility for the creation, nurturing, and education of good human beings. The dignity of the family and the quality of family life is of utmost importance to the well-being of any society. When a society's families suffer from extreme forms of instability, that society itself will very likely suffer from instability and violence.

It would be ideal if each person were conceived as the fruit of true love between his or her parents. From birth on, every person should be loved and cared for by truly loving and mature parents, parents full of divine wisdom and love. These children, the fruit of such parents, would grow to become individuals of good character who would one day meet their own ideal spouse and begin families of their own.

Unfortunately the world we know is far from ideal. Instead of love, many families are characterized by suffering and even cruelty. Parents pass on to their children their shortcomings as well as their good qualities.

Children are born innocent and love their parents dearly; they are profoundly affected by their experiences - both good and evil - within the family.

Religious people in particular, who have devoted their lives to change the world from a state characterized by evil and selfishness to one characterized by love and peace, can find no more sacred task than the purification and sanctification of the family. This is the purpose of the Blessing.

ISLAM:

"He has created spouses for you and planted affection and mercy between you."

-- Qur'an 30.21

CHRISTIANITY:

'From the beginning of creation 'God made them male and female.' For this reason a `man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

-- Mark 10:6-9

SIKHISM:

"Not those are true husband and wife that with each other [merely] consort: Truly wedded are those that in two frames, are as one light."

-- Adi Granth, Var Suhi, M.3

THE WORLD PEACE BLESSING OF MARRIAGE

The ministry of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Mrs. Moon has been characterized by an emphasis on marriage and family as the centre point for the experience of divine love. They teach that true love can be most fully realized in a family in which God's love abides. The relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, and brothers and sisters should be characterized by a profoundly fulfilling and enduring love. They also teach that the greatest problems in our world have their root in the breakdown of the family ideal through the misuse of love. If the ideal of the family can be re-established, then eventually world peace can be achieved. In emphasizing the sanctity of marriage, the wedding day is described as the day of Blessing.

Father and Mother Moon, known as True Parents to Unification members, administer the Blessing as a conduit for communicating divine grace and support to families. The term True Parents designates a couple which manifests God's ideal of true love in the family. The Blessing initiates each couple on the path to become True Parents and establish true families in their own right.

Since 1960 the Blessing has been offered to tens of thousands of couples. Many come to the Blessing as young fiancées who, through the Blessing, begin married life as man and wife. Others who attend the Blessing have been married for many years. These married couples attend the Blessing to re-dedicate their loving families before Heaven and Earth. Every Blessing has large numbers of international, inter-racial, and inter-religious couples. They gather together at the same time and declare in the name of True Love the unity of humankind. They proclaim their solidarity with people from all parts of the world and from all different cultural, religious, racial and national backgrounds.

The Blessing Ceremony itself is simple. Couples gather together at an appropriate place, vows are recited, rings are exchanged, and prayers are offered to bless and protect the couples who have taken these vows. The vows emphasize the couples' readiness to serve the will of God. Then, commitment to true love, fidelity and permanency in marriage, and their pledge to serve the cause of world peace. Prior to the Blessing Ceremony, there is a Holy Wine (or Holy Nectar for those who may not take wine) Ceremony which signifies internal purification. Following the Blessing, couples participate in a brief ceremony called the Ceremony to Remove Resentment; the purpose here is to begin or renew the marriage free from any past resentment or bad feeling between the husband and wife. After the Blessing the couples spend a period of time (usually 40 days) preparing in a prayerful way for a pure, new start to married life.

CONFUCIANISM:

"The moral life of man may be likened to travelling to a distant place; one must start from the nearest stage. It may be likened to ascending a height of public responsibility; one must start from the lowest step, one's family"

-- *Doctrine of the Mean 15.2*

BUDDHISM:

"Supporting one's father and mother, cherishing wife and children and a peaceful occupation; this is the greatest blessing."

-- *Sutta Nipata 262*

THE BLESSING OF PEOPLE FROM THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Prior to 1992 the Blessing had been a practice for Unificationists. However, in 1992 the Blessing was offered to couples from other faiths who held similar ideals of marriage and family. Such couples are not expected to become Unificationists. Their participation, however, does represent a profound appreciation for the work of Father and Mother Moon, and for their teachings on marriage and family. Blessed families of all religions can become members of the Family Federation for World Peace, an organization through which such families support each others' efforts to realize these lofty ideals. The Blessing is meant for all people. It has proven to be of great help in strengthening each person's own religious life. Like important religious ceremonies in other faiths, it enables people to climb higher into the realm of heavenly fortune. Participation in the Blessing helps overcome barriers which interfere with efforts to achieve one's own long cherished spiritual and religious ideals. Furthermore, the Blessing helps to strengthen the ability of believers to relate to friends in other religions.

JUDAISM:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord, King of the universe, who created mirth and joy, bridegroom and bride, gladness, jubilation, dancing and delight, love and brotherhood, peace and fellowship."

-- *Talmud, Ketubot 8a*

HINDUISM:

"I am He, you are She; I am Song, you are Verse, I am Heaven, you are Earth, We two shall here together dwell, becoming parents of children."

-- *Atharva Veda 14.2.71*

GOOD FAMILIES -- GOOD INDIVIDUALS

Good families are made from good marriages, and good marriages are made from good men and women. Unless we become people of goodness, we cannot bring goodness to our marriages and families. Our first obligation as religious people is to achieve goodness within our own lives. At the centre of goodness is unselfishness; at the centre of evil is selfishness.

Throughout history our best guide for self improvement and responsible moral behaviour has come from our respective religions -- our scriptures, traditions, and teachers. Through personal striving and seeking to apply what we learn, we endeavour to make of ourselves respectable and upright people who can contribute constructively in our families and in society. In these efforts all people experience struggle. We try to embody the high ideals of our traditions, but we experience daily in ourselves the unwanted impulses of greed, dishonesty, lust, and self-excuse-qualities which we know lead to suffering in the world and which we must reluctantly acknowledge are in ourselves as well.

In embarking on a Blessed marriage, we as individuals are called to progress to a higher stage of unselfishness. With God's Blessing and support, we can overcome the age old problem of desiring one thing with our higher mind yet finding in ourselves powerful impulses to do the opposite. The Blessing calls us to strive constantly for the higher good, for the sake of our spouses, for the sake of our children, and for the sake of the world.

FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

Just as the individual is inextricably part of his or her family's circumstances, reputation, etc., so is every family bound to the social and global environment in which it exists. Even the most ideal family, if it lives in a war zone, may suffer from the consequences of war. Even a pure and saintly young girl, growing up in an immoral society, will inevitably suffer unwanted influences.

The vast majority of people mistakenly invest only in the welfare of their own families. But for families truly seeking a better world and a secure destiny, a far more reasonable and responsible course is to concern themselves with the larger arena of social stability and world peace. This is why religious and conscientious people are impelled to move beyond selfishness and family-centeredness, and seek ways to serve others and make the world a better, safer, and more peaceful place in which to live.

The Blessing provides the opportunity to expand one's love and service beyond one's personal family to the society and world. Couples who participate in the Blessing form a unique international alliance dedicated to applying the family's lessons of love to the complex world of social and international relations. This common bond has proven successful in overcoming and dissolving barriers of race, religion, and culture. The thousands of Blessed families proclaim to the world that they stand for peace and universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

AN INVITATION

The Blessing is an opportunity for couples of every religion and nationality to renew and re-dedicate their marriages and families to God and to the cause of world peace. It can open a new channel for God to abundantly bless your family and to aid you in your efforts to live up to the highest ideals of your faith. We sincerely hope that you can join the many people from every religion, nation and race in this glorious testimony to the Divine purpose of establishing world peace. We invite you to join in building one great loving family of humankind, under the Blessed grace of Heaven -- the One True and Loving God.