

4th Conference of WFPW Europe 2010

“Creating Herstory of the 21st Century”

Respected Women Leaders, and Dear Members,

It's my great honor to be able to share with you a few thoughts on the role of women in this global era.

Throughout history, women have been discriminated against and oppressed in a male-dominated, patriarchal society. This is because most of the countries developed their social norms according to their religious traditions. Unfortunately, most of these religious traditions were male-centered.

Therefore, until the early 20th century, women were deprived of even basic human rights, such as education, economic rights, the right to vote, and so on. They were unable to lead a life equal to men.

In 21C, we should create ‘Herstory’ to make balance with ‘History’, so that we can have ‘a Whole Story’ of human beings.

As you can see, when the UN was founded after WWII, it tried to protect the weak. The weakest among society usually being

women and children, they put into the Declaration of Human Rights, their belief to protect them. Even without war, if the basic needs of mankind such as food, clothing and shelter are lacking, there can be no peace in the world.

We are now in the 21st century. In this century, women are faced with the call of the times. With qualities unique to women, with love and a life of service based on motherly love, we are called to build a Culture of Peace, in the family, the society, the country, and the world.

The 21st century is firstly, the era of technology and information. The amazing development of the internet and real-time communication are making the world truly one global village. What happens in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East reaches us instantly, world-wide.

The financial crisis or natural disaster in one region threaten the entire world. As you know well, the nuclear issue of North Korea, or the Middle East conflicts not only affects that region, but they are related directly to peace in the entire world.

Secondly, the 21C is a multi-racial, multi-cultural era. The era of the Global Family is at hand. In Korea, 3 couples out of 10 that get married these days are international, and the number is growing. Korea is no longer the homogenous race that we've known for thousands of years.

Of the 70M population of North and South Korea, about 10% or roughly 7M Koreans are living overseas. Wherever we go, we can now get kimchi and bulgogi,

Today, we truly need an international mind that transcends race, country and religion, in order to open a peaceful era of multi-race and multi-culture. We need to make sincere effort to embrace the other, and cooperate with each other.

Thirdly, what I'd like to emphasize the most, is that the 21st century is the Era of Women. When the Creator made man and woman, he gave men feminine attributes, and masculine attributes to women also.

The Latin word 'anima' (in Jungian psychology) is the feminine part of a man's personality, and 'animus' is the masculine part of a woman's personality. We have become used to the concept and bias of women being feminine, and men being masculine. Thus, women haven't really developed the masculinity within themselves, and vice versa for men. It is true that at times, we feel an inferiority complex.

Of course we recognize the biological differences of the Sexes, but the social roles of Gender should not receive discrimination. If at times men can develop their femininity, and women can develop their masculinity, we can see a better harmony in the social gender roles.

In the 21C, women are the competitive power of a nation. Countries in which many women are entering into politics, economy, culture, and other areas have high competitive power, and their national image is rising.

Today, there are 17 countries in the world which have women presidents, prime ministers and high-level officials. The number of countries in which women occupy 30% and more of Congress is growing gradually. The higher the ratio of women in administration and executive positions, the better the country becomes! There is a study that shows in such countries, the national budget is reduced, the corruption index is lowered, and political strife is lessened.

The country with the highest ratio of women in Congress is Rwanda of Africa. 41 out of 80 in Congress are women. In 1994 as you may recall, of the total population of 7 million, 1 million were massacred. Whole villages and cities were wiped out. With the nation's survival on the line, Rwanda chose by policy to send women to high decision-making posts. Today, Rwanda is most quickly growing into one of the IT powers of Africa.

In Korea as well, early in the year, 92 justices were appointed, based on their records. Of them, 67 were women, and their grades were higher than the men. In the Korean armed forces academies, all of the top students were women. Women are gradually beginning to show their true colors in the respective fields.

But in fact, people do not trust women in leadership. Even women themselves doubt each other in their leadership. Therefore we need to raise and train women leaders, whose leadership to be trust and respected.

If we are to raise women leaders, what is most important? I believe in three areas of education. The most important and basic is 1) education of the heart, to develop mature character, 2) education of norms to form proper human and family relations, and then 3) knowledge and technical education to contribute to a more peaceful world.

In today's world, people have come to the point where they feel they can do everything by themselves, even cloning human beings! However, in reality, we cannot choose what year to be born into, we cannot choose our parents, what country we are born, or when we are to die. ...This means, that we should always have humility, and a sense of awe before God with sincerity.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Nobel laureate said, that when human beings denied God and spirituality, communism and materialism came to fill that empty spot in man's heart. People cannot be fulfilled, unless they understand the spiritual value of our lives.

In this new age, we ourselves must change our mentality, so that we can express our new self, and revive our spirituality, or the

heart to attend God. Selfish materialism does not bring peace and happiness. We can train and develop ourselves, to unite our words and actions, our mind and body. Peace then, starts from myself.

We women need to develop further the 'leadership of attendance,' or 'serving leadership' showing consideration for others. There is a limit to the domineering type of rule by men. We can incorporate qualities of maternal, embracing love and service that women perhaps express more easily. Women can exert “Soft Power” in leadership for their husband and children in the family, for neighbors and society.

We women ourselves can become leaders, and nurture more women leaders in this global era of the 21st century. If such women leaders can multiply in the world, we will be on the way to genuine world peace.

We believe this is also the goal of WFWP, to help build a world without conflict, a world of true peace. We women are also meant to be mainstream heroines in human history. In order to do this, we need to recover or develop true spirituality in tune with our greater purpose.

However, it is not easy to nurture such leadership, in fact. We women ourselves must bear the mentality that we are not peripheral people, but main characters in history. We must have a pioneering, initiating spirit, faith, and passion. Women can

network to build solidarity and cooperation. We must work together, just as one country cannot do much alone, but must work with other countries today. I believe that this 'Women's Conference of Europe' is one such example.

In this global age, it is important to have specialized knowledge such as in politics, economy, international relations, and be able to communicate in other languages. Today, as people's life spans have increased, the UN says that an 'elderly person' is someone who is 75 years old and above. Until then, we still have many years, so we can offer our services. We can work on specializing as leaders in various fields!

Let's look at some great women who were pioneers but born in the wrong age, as well as some great contemporary role models who have paved the way for "HerStory."

Although she is known as one of the three worst wives in the world, Sophia Tolstoy was, in fact, an extremely intelligent woman with outstanding literary talent. She proofread Tolstoy's works, and she herself wished to become a writer. However, after marrying Tolstoy, she bore him 12 children, 5 of whom died when they were young, causing much pain. As a result she was thrown into depression, and became known as a nagging bad wife.

Jenny Marx was a comrade of Marx's socialist revolution, and contributed much as his personal secretary. The long years in

exile and poverty, and the suicides of both of their two daughters led to misery. Moreover, the discovery that the son of Marx' close friend, Engels, was in fact her own husband's son, wounded her deeply.

The famed Einstein's first wife, Mileva Maric was also an outstanding student of the sciences. At a time when many women were not accepted into educational institutions, Mileva entered the Swiss Federal Polytechnical School. She was the only female student of physics in their section. Mileva was a sounding board for Einstein in his research, and they fell in love and they married, but their second son was ill. She could not focus on research and Einstein did not encourage her. He went on to receive the Nobel Prize in Physics but fell in love with his cousin, who became his second wife. Mileva spent the latter part of her unhappy life in a nursing home.

When I think of the bright and talented women whose lives were sacrificed and sad throughout history, my heart aches.

There is a woman pioneer in the United States, called Elizabeth Stanton. She recognized the discrimination and prejudices developed within Western civilization against women in the early 20th century, and wrote the book, *The Woman's Bible*. She realized that the Christian tradition played a large part in promoting such discrimination. Mrs. Stanton viewed the Bible from the women's perspective, strove to change women's

perception of themselves through her interpretation of the Bible, and built the foundation of Women's Studies in the US.

Rosa Parks was the Mother figure of the civil rights movement for the black people of America. In the 1950s, racial discrimination was extremely strong in the American South. In 1955, in the city of Montgomery, Alabama, Mrs. Parks did not offer her seat to a white person on a bus, and was arrested and fined for that. This led her to find the young minister Rev. Martin Luther King, as a leader of the civil rights movement in America. After a decade of struggle, finally in 1965, the black people were given the right to vote. Personally, her life was one of sacrifice and unhappiness, but when she passed away in 2006, the world media applauded her as the lady who brought a big change not only to US history but also the entire human history.

Jody Williams was watching the TV news one day. She saw the tragedy of children who had lost arms and legs, due to exploding landmines. Deeply shocked, from that day, she started using the fax and email to develop a campaign to ban landmines. After 3 years, her efforts were rewarded. In October 1997, some 1000 NGOs gathered in Canada. Over 130 nations signed the Ottawa Treaty to ban the production and sales of landmines. That year, Mrs. Williams received the honor of the Nobel Peace Prize. She also received 'UN Peace Award for Woman' last year.

In this 21st century, era of technology and information, I believe Jody Williams is a wise pioneer, who brought together motherly love and internet technology, to create a wonderful HerStory.

Mother Teresa requires no explanation. As a Catholic nun, she went to India, the center of Hinduism and Islam. Transcending walls of race and religion, she was recognized as a saint. We cannot help but offer our respects to her endless sacrifice and devoted efforts.

Respected women leaders,Actually I was born under the communist regime in North Korea.

In 1950, during the Korean War, my family fled to the South and experienced the biggest discouragement in life in the atrocities of war and the hardships of poverty. Moreover my father was captured by North Korean soldiers during our flight, and we have never heard of him since then. My only brother died because of no medical treatment. For many years I had an anger and hatred to the North, could never forgive them.

In 2001, for the first time in 50 years after I left home in the North, I could have a chance to visit North Korea, and I had lots of tears to realize the poor and desperate situation of North Korean people. After I came back to the South, I initiated '1% Love Share Project for North Korean women and children. Both of South and North

Korean women leaders have tried to understand each other, and the relationship between them was getting better.

In 2007, as you can see, WFWP Korea could organize ‘the International Women’s Conference for Peace and Unification between South and North Korea in Mt. Kumgang in the North.

Now I am one of the co-Chair of ‘Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation between South and North Korea’, and today, we extend the aid more broadly for needy countries.

However, as you may know, since the recent relationship between the South and the North is getting worse, we have been worried for that.

It is no easy task to build a culture of peace, and a happy world. Much devotion, sacrificial work and tears will be needed. We women have overcome over the long years, much discrimination and hardships. With the wisdom and experience accumulated, we can build solid, happy families of genuine love. Let us continue to extend our work for peace, going beyond the family to our neighbors, the community and the world!