

Peace Road 2020: Healing hearts in the Southwest Region

Natascha Phillips
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After a whirlwind of events in the Midwest ([read report](#)), Peace Road 2020 moved to the Southwest region of the United States in the second week of August. As a project initiated by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the Mother of Peace, Peace Road 2020 has sought to bring healing and reconciliation to people that have faced hatred, injustice and prejudice for generations. Locations on the Peace Road tour were chosen for their historic and cultural significance, as seen in the reports below from Arkansas, Texas, Nevada and Colorado.

took part in a program at the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. Nine black students were denied enrollment at the high school in 1957, sparking a national crisis just three years after the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling to desegregate public schools. "People from all over the South who were opposed to their enrollment came here," said Bruce Biggin, WFWP Arkansas representative and key organizer of the event. "President Eisenhower had to call in protection for the students so they could integrate into the school. Eventually, after the school was integrated, this was a victory and success for integrating schools throughout America."

On August 10, Peace Road participants visited the Arkansas Korean War Veterans Memorial and also



The perseverance of the young people, which shifted things at that time of segregation, struck National Peace Road Tour member Yoshie Manaka. God working through the youth was a recurrent theme at this event in Little Rock.

One of the main speakers was longtime WFWP friend Natalie Larrison, the outreach director of the Syrian Emergency Task Force, a role that has allowed her to speak to a lot of young people. She spoke about her work to educate people about what is going on in the Middle East and how young people can make an impact: "You have tools in your heart and in your love to share that can make a huge impact on what happens for our brothers

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She also shared about her experience as a panelist of the Global Women's Peace Network Southwest launch last year in Las Vegas, and how passionate she was about raising the next generation of youth.



The next day, the National Peace Road Tour made a stop in Dallas, Texas, at Thanks-Giving Square, a serene and meditative oasis in the middle of the city. WFWP member and former regional director Laura Hornbeck described it as a "moving and joyful" event that celebrated the diversity of all in attendance, including several long-time WFWP supporters such as speaker Dr. Ester Davis.

The program was masterfully led by emcee Dr. Tricia Harris, who has also been a faithful supporter of WFWP for the past ten years, and one of the speakers that really impressed Laura was her old friend Imam Marzuq Jaami. He reminded people that police in Texas who had committed violence against African-Americans have been arrested and in many cases jailed for their offenses. "That is how we deal with bad police in Texas -- through the law," he said. He wanted to remind

everyone that only through the application of the constitution and the law can we hope to have a better world, not through violence and riots. Central to the program was the presentation of 5000 colorful origami cranes strung together as five Senbazuru in honor of the five Dallas police officers who were gunned down while escorting peaceful protesters in 2016. The Dallas Police Department Commander and the Deputy Chief who accepted the Senbazuru, handcrafted by several dedicated Japanese women, were

visibly moved by these beautiful expressions of love and healing.



The second part of the Peace Road event was held at the historic Freedman's Cemetery, a burial site with unmarked graves of thousands of freed slaves from the time during and after Reconstruction. "Many former slaves were not given proper burials," shared Laura. "I was struck by the comparison with my own ancestors whose burial sites are known to our family, while many Black people today cannot trace their ancestry the way I can." It was a deeply heartfelt experience for all who participated.

Another moving experience of reconciliation was the Peace Road tributary event in Grand Junction, Colorado, held on August 14. The evening program, held outside a Unitarian Universalist Church and entitled "Hearing the Hearts of Our Brothers and Sisters of Color", was organized by WFWP Colorado Representative Gale Alves together with her husband Antonio. More than 70 participants, including the local mayor and several religious leaders, were in attendance, and everyone was completely focused and supportive of the program and of its desire to take sincere steps toward the healing of racism in this country.



According to Gale, the spirit of Peace Road 2020 in Grand Junction, Colorado was "We all want to contribute to the end of racism, we want things to change for the better. And we hear the suffering hearts of our brothers and sisters of color. We need to look inside ourselves to see how we can improve."

There was a strong spiritual atmosphere, and participants felt the presence of people's ancestors. "The white audience was tearful and deeply listening to our repentance," shared Gale. "Our black brothers and sisters in attendance were grateful that we created a space for them to safely share what racism means to them in their daily lives. They heard and acknowledged our repentance. We felt from this group of people of color that it was their ancestors who benefited more from our repentance. It is understandable and right that black people want to focus on and experience substantial improvements in their lives NOW."

One black brother offered a hug of thanks. Another quietly said, "Thank you for your repentance. But you know, beyond the black and white conflict, it is also a human thing -- we all struggle with each other, within our races, between husband and wife, in our families..."

A black woman who can trace her ancestors in Grand Junction back seven generations said in front of the crowd, "We thank you for what you did tonight. If we all believe in Jesus and God, we know we all need to change our hearts."

On that same day, in Las Vegas, Nevada, prayerful hearts were touched by Peace Road events at three historic and culturally significant locations. The day was hot but hearts were warm, reported WFWP Las Vegas Chairwoman Sera Hirano, who had been closely involved in the planning of these events. WFWP passed out water, tangerines and granola bars throughout all three events to ensure everyone was healthy, strong and well hydrated under the intense desert sun.

The morning started off bright and early at 8 AM with a gathering at the iconic Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas sign, in sight of a nearby billboard with the smiling faces of Father and Mother Moon, encouraging everyone to unite and build a holy community. This location was also significant as a place to remember the victims of a mass shooting that occurred very close by, at a music concert in October 2017. The sheriffs and other first responders were the valley's heroes that day, as they are every day of their careers. The "Mother of Peace" memoir was given to Officer John McGrath, of the Clark County Sheriff's department, along with 1000 Origami Cranes of prayer and healing. Various speakers explained about the Peace Road, America and Las Vegas' struggles and difficulties, yet also highlighted the newfound

determination and commitment of all people to come together for peace.



The next historical site was the Old Mormon Fort, where the first Mormon missionaries settled in 1855, located in the old downtown of the city. One speaker shared the story of her husband's family, who were the leaders of the group that built and lived in the fort over 150 years ago. Nevada State Senator Mo Denis, a son of Cuban immigrants, spoke about the need to reach out and understand each other in order to live in peace, especially with the state's growing Hispanic community. Representatives from three different Southwest historical ethnic groups, Native American, Spanish and Chinese, offered prayers of healing and reconciliation. Finally, UNLV professor Dr. Jason Wasden read the proclamation given by the city of North Las Vegas that August 14th, 2020 is Peace

Road Day!

The last stop for Peace Road Las Vegas was a short 1.2 miles away on the Historic Westside at Harrison House. The Peace Road bicycle team rode across the historic divide from east to west, bringing deep repentance, love and unity. Harrison House was a place where black entertainers, such as Sammy Davis Jr., stayed while they sang as headliners on the Las Vegas strip. Those top billed artists had to stay off the Strip due to the segregation laws of the city. Following an introduction to Harrison House and great speaking points by our strong WFWP member Ms. Katherine Duncan, Rev. Steven Crymes offered a moving prayer for unity and peace. Professional jazz dancer Devrynn Bryant shared deeply about the effects of racism on artists and performers and the need to find and uphold the best in each other instead of using the differences to destroy one another. In the embracing, family atmosphere of the Harrison House, people kept sharing their testimonies as no one wanted to leave.

"The weekend prior to the Peace Road visit, WFWP and other organizations all came together on invitation from Harrison House for a neighborhood clean up that helped so much in preparing the environment both spiritually and physically to welcome the Peace Road Riders," shared Sera. Two groups in the community, Black Lives Matter and Black Voices for Trump, were both there together picking up debris from the desert lots and streets, something that Katherine Duncan's adult son pointed out has never happened anywhere ever before. Moving forward, Devrynn Bryant is excited to continue to work together with WFWP to establish a Harrison House WFWP Organic Peace Garden to honor this Peace Road experience by literally planting real seeds and making a sustainable commitment to serving the community. Peace Road 2020 has left a lasting impression on the Southwest region, as it has elsewhere, and the conversations that it has inspired are only the beginning. Stay tuned for our final report on Peace Road events in the West Coast and the conclusion of the tour in the next issue of Logic of Love News.

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