

120+ Generation Peace Academy Member's Two-Week Pilgrimage to Korea

Roland Platt
February 9, 2020



More than a hundred and twenty Generation Peace Academy (GPA) participants arrived in Korea on February 2 for a two-week pilgrimage. GPA began their pilgrimage on February 3 with a trip to the northernmost part of South Korea and the closest visit-able location to True Parents' birthplaces; that is, the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The GPA group prayed and journaled at Imjingak, a Korean War Memorial, located seven kilometers from the DMZ. Despite the

solemn atmosphere at the memorial, participants celebrated with hope in their hearts that Korea will reunite by ringing the Liberty Bell and pinning up ribbons. GPA then had the invaluable opportunity to cross the Tong-il Bridge for a quick visit to Tong-il Village, a small community located only four and a half kilometers from the North Korean border.

Then participants retraced True Father's historical journey as a refugee alongside Won-pil Kim and Jong-hwa Pak by bus as they made their way to Busan. "Although the scenery was breathtakingly beautiful, we could not help but feel the immense gravity that True Father felt as he climbed the surrounding mountains in travail, seeking to start God's church," one participant shared.

On the second day, GPA spent the morning learning more about the beginning of the Unification movement at the Beomnaegol Church, the first established church center in Busan. To visit the Busan Holy Ground and offered heartfelt prayers of gratitude, participants hiked up the same mountain on which True Father had shed blood, sweat and tears. "I couldn't help but be moved as I discovered my roots and the history of the movement," said another young Unificationist.

The next day, GPA headed to KINTEX, in the Seoul Metropolitan Area, to attend the IAYSP event. It was a great opportunity to learn about the different peace initiatives started by the Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) chapters in Korea, Japan and America. True Mother delivered a powerful message in which she expressed how proud she was of all the young people for their dedication to establishing peace. She encouraged everyone in the audience to continue moving forward with strong determination.

On February 6, GPA participants woke up bright and early to attend the worldwide celebration of True Father's centennial birthday and True Mother's seventy-seventh birthday. An emotional musical performance depicted True Parents' decades of work for peace, emphasizing True Mother's continued commitment following her husband's ascension.

February 7 marked the day of the seventh Hyojeong Cosmic Blessing Ceremony. GPA witnessed thousands of couples receiving the blessing at the Cheongshim World Peace Center and celebrated True Parents' sixtieth Holy Wedding Anniversary. Then, GPA represented America by performing the "*Mujogeon* (Unconditional)" dance and singing "Nan Jeongmal" and the American classic "Country Roads" at the Cheon Il Guk One Heart Cultural Festival.

Hundreds of Unificationists met on the morning of February 8 at the Cheongshim World Peace Center to celebrate the week of events and honor True Mother's past seven years of global efforts for peace. True Mother expressed her gratitude for the past seven years and her expectations for what we can accomplish in the next seven years. Many worldwide leaders stood before True Mother and committed to establishing a peaceful world by 2027.

Later, GPA traveled to the famous Yamok Church, center of early Unificationist activities, and met the groundskeeper, Jae-sung Hwang, who excitedly shared stories about Yamok Church's history. As participants made their way around the grounds, the beauty of the humble lifestyle of True Father and early Unificationists captivated them.

On February 9, the seventh day of the pilgrimage, GPA met with Special Task Force (STF) Europe to share about our respective programs. The last time such a meeting occurred was thirteen years ago. "It was a really powerful experience to see one another," said one GPA participant. "Even though we are in different programs and from different continents, we have very similar desires and goals and we connected as brothers and sisters."