

President of Guyana Coaches Young Unificationists on Leadership

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President of Guyana Bharrat Jagdeo (black suit) advised the students of Generation Peace Academy (GPA), as "future leaders serving in and beyond their nation," to address issues on a national level.

The 15 students of Generation Peace Academy (GPA) doing a project in Georgetown, Guyana wasted no time establishing themselves in the local community and met with the outgoing President of the state, Bharrat Jagdeo the day of their arrival on November 23, 2011.

The meeting, initially thought to have been scheduled to last 15 minutes, spanned an hour, during which President Jagdeo answered questions and coached the young adults to have a mindset that would enable them to serve as political leaders someday. According to Georgia Pearson, the onsite service coordinator for GPA, the President was "really taken by our group of GPA youth, and he mentioned how young leaders are needed to inspire the youth of Guyana to think in a positive way in order to help bring the country out of its current state."



The Mayor of Georgetown, Guyana, Hamilton Green (green shirt) met with the GPA activists for breakfast on their second day in the state.

President Jagdeo spoke about the political history of Guyana, explaining how during the early years of its independence, the country took a turn that resulted in the massive growth of government control, which resulted in resistance and more blatant disregard for laws and the judicial process. He said that he was punished for his outspokenness in high school and that many of his peers became politically active in

their teens, determined to change laws that were perceived as egregious. However, he said, “This culture... is slowly being changed. Part of that change is happening because of an increase in ownership. More people are buying their homes and owning things and therefore, they see a need to protect these valuable assets legally.

“We are working to change the culture from one of dependency on government to one that allows personal entrepreneurship and offers a respect for laws and the judicial system. Our capital is still filled with litter in part because people think they have a right to litter, and it is a sign of disregard for government restrictions, but we are working on changing this attitude slowly, in part through educating school children and also doing litter-free campaigns. Such attitude changes take time, but we are headed in the right direction.

“During the 30 years after independence when we were going through a time of deep troubles, the economy was so reliant on foreign loans that 94 percent of the nation’s income went to servicing foreign debt. This was almost an impossible situation, but in the last 15 years we have turned this around, and our debt is one of the lowest in the region.”



GPA trainees also stopped by the office of Prime Minister Sam Hinds (white shirt) to greet him.

President Jagdeo also provided direct advice to his young-adult audience of GPA trainees. “As leaders, you should look at issues, problems and challenges from a perspective that goes beyond your own community or national perspective,” he said. “Too many leaders in our world do not get out of their country and spend time understanding how other people live and think. They have little or no experience seeing from the perspective of others; therefore they make decisions based on a narrow and limited perspective as they have to rely on the reports of others. You, as future leaders serving in and beyond your nation, are gaining a perspective that will be valuable in becoming quality leaders.

“Our world is full of leaders who have a strong intellectual capacity, but this is clearly not enough. Leadership should come through the heart. Your good ideas and plans need to be filtered by the heart. As members of a program dedicated to serve others, you are developing a quality of heart needed to be a great leader.”

The President said that he is determined to ensure that the democratic process takes root in Guyana, but that he looks towards a new future as his presidency comes to an end. “On November 28, 2011, my 12 years of service will be complete, and I am looking forward to doing new things. The hardest challenge during this time was always being public. I want to go around without being recognized. In this next stage of my life I want to start a family and take on the joys and responsibilities that go with that. I look forward to the unexpected.”

According to Pearson, the GPA students had the opportunity to discuss the work of Lovin' Life Ministries and Rev. Sun Myung Moon with the President. He was informed that all 15 students had parents who were matched and married by Rev. and Mrs. Moon. "We were able to tell the President about the fruit of True Parents' investment in a peaceful world with our presence," she said.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the GPA students gathered for a photo with President Jagdeo and then presented him with a Generation Peace Academy T-shirt and a copy of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's autobiography.

The following morning, the GPA team met with Hamilton Green, the mayor of Georgetown, who addressed the issues of future leaders in Guyana. "We should not bring the baggage from our parents and from the past generation into the next generation," he said, and encouraged the GPA student to discern through new eyes what is right or wrong. At noon the same day, the GPA team went to the office of Sam Hinds, the prime minister of Guyana, and greeted him.