

God's Hope for America Bus Tour - God's Sweet Irony

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Every day, the God's Hope for America Holy Ground pilgrimage is retracing True Father's footsteps from his first visit to the United States, nearly 50 years ago.

1965 might as well be ancient history for the 15 teenagers on our bus. They can't even conceive of the unconnected world of 1965, where important communications came mostly by US Mail (what's that?) and phone calls had to be carefully timed to have a chance of connecting.

But recently we've all been transported even further in the past than usual, with visits to some of the most historically important sites in US History: Gettysburg, Valley Forge, and now, Philadelphia, first capital of the United States and site of many of its most important political developments.

In a twist of what I presume is divine humor, it's fallen to me, a naturalized citizen but British by birth, education and culture, to serve as a preliminary tour guide for the facts and places of the War of Independence. We don't learn this stuff in British schools—can't think why—and so I'm reduced to Google and speed reading at the last minute. Remember the scene in *The Matrix* where Trinity learns how to fly an attack helicopter in 7 seconds? That's me, minus the biker leather.

The more I learn about this incredible period in American history, though, the more intriguing it is. In Valley Forge, we learned about the deep faith and personal integrity of George Washington as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. In Philadelphia, the story continues as we learn about political wrangling of the late 1780s that created our modern form of government with Washington as our first President.

The high point for me was not inside Independence Hall, where large and fidgety groups of tourists are herded along by tour guides whose eager demeanor can't quite hide the fact that they've said the same things thousands of times before. Of course, there are always new things to learn about the events that took place there, but the real highlight of my trip was the Congressional Hall, where, in 1797 John Adams was quietly sworn in as the second president of US. Power changed hands smoothly as a result of an election, not a civil war, change in the ruling monarchy, or invasion. And so it has gone ever since.

Another must-see is the National Constitution Center, just a few hundred yards away. We learn more about how the US constitution came to be signed, after more than 80 amendments that Jefferson complained had "mutilated" his original dream. We learn about the process of amendment, and how few amendments have been necessary. We are reminded that even though the first elections in the United States would hardly meet today's standards, and even though our nation has seen its fair share of scoundrels in office, the system has survived.

This is an important case study for Unificationists, as we engage with our own newly drafted Constitution and debate over its terms and provisions. I for one am very glad this conversation has started and this trip to Philadelphia revealed to me some close parallels between True Mother and George Washington. It takes real character and courage to be able to see beyond one's own lifetime, and consider how one's own actions may long affect future generations. As Washington put it:

"I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent."

Our Holy Ground event this evening ends in a powerful but warm summer rainstorm, but our spirits are not dampened. With each fat, warm raindrop, I imagine God showering His grace and mercy anew upon these United States. Amen!