

God's Hope for America Bus Tour - Day 26 – New York City, East Garden, and Belvedere

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“Today was the most profound day for me of the God’s Hope for America pilgrimage” said Beverly Berndt, a participant on the bus. So many brothers and sisters royally greeted us at the Central Park Holy Ground in New York City. Local Unificationist Yazuko Takahashi remembered meeting Father Moon at this holy ground on Sunday mornings 40 years ago. It was often cold, but he would come anyway and pray that God would not leave America. The gathering was large and many harmonious voices were raised in song and could be heard as one made their way from the Boathouse to the site. Tearful prayers and great cheers of Ok Mansei’s and we were on our way out into the busy city of Manhattan for a rally at the 9/11 Memorial site.

The 9-11 memorial site elicited tearful prayers and a moving rally featuring several outstanding faith leaders. They stirred up our appreciation for God’s continued blessings on this nation and shared their hopes that these blessings can fulfill our global responsibility to love and serve the world.

Back to Central Park we cheered on 40 participants who got on a bike and cycled through Central Park joining from afar the Cycling for Peace effort going from Japan through South Korea to the 38th parallel to promote the unity of North and South.

Keeping up with an already packed morning and early afternoon, we headed to the New Yorker Hotel, purchased by Father Moon in 1965, for lunch and a tour of the hotel. After a short presentation with photos about the history of the hotel and future plans for construction and renovations, everyone went up to the roof for a spectacular view of the city.

By this time, the bus was filled to capacity and two large passenger vans were brought in. Together, we made our way to East Garden and Belvedere in Westchester County. These locations hold a place in the hearts of every Unificationist fortunate enough to spend time with Father and Mother Moon closely learning scripture or being present for a Holy Day celebration. For many, this stop brought deep repentance and redetermination to continue building upon Father Moon’s legacy. Flashes of intimate personal experiences of Father Moon at leaders’ meetings, Mother Moon’s incredible love for Heung Jin Moon, their second child who left this world too soon, and taking part (for one night) in a 120 day prayer condition with a very tearful Hyo Jin Moon in the cold while Father Moon was in Danbury. “I could really repent for not being able to fathom Father Moon’s vision and depth and his resolve to save this nation and the world” shared Beverly.

Wonderful food, entertainment, a visit from Teddy Verheyen, who accompanied Father Moon for a while on the original tour to create 55 Holy Grounds in 48 states in 43 days in 1965, a passionate call from action by Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, and Parents’ Day awards highlighted the evening in Belvedere.

What a DAY!