

The Native Lands - God's Hope for America Bus Tour

Michael Balcomb
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As the God's Hope for America pilgrimage wound through its Cattle Drive stretch from St. Paul, Minnesota to Denver, Colorado, we were reminded of the power that even just one person, or just one family or small group of people, can have in spreading God's love and doing God's work. We also experienced the history of the Native Americans and Korean War veterans, and felt great awe at these beautiful Western lands.

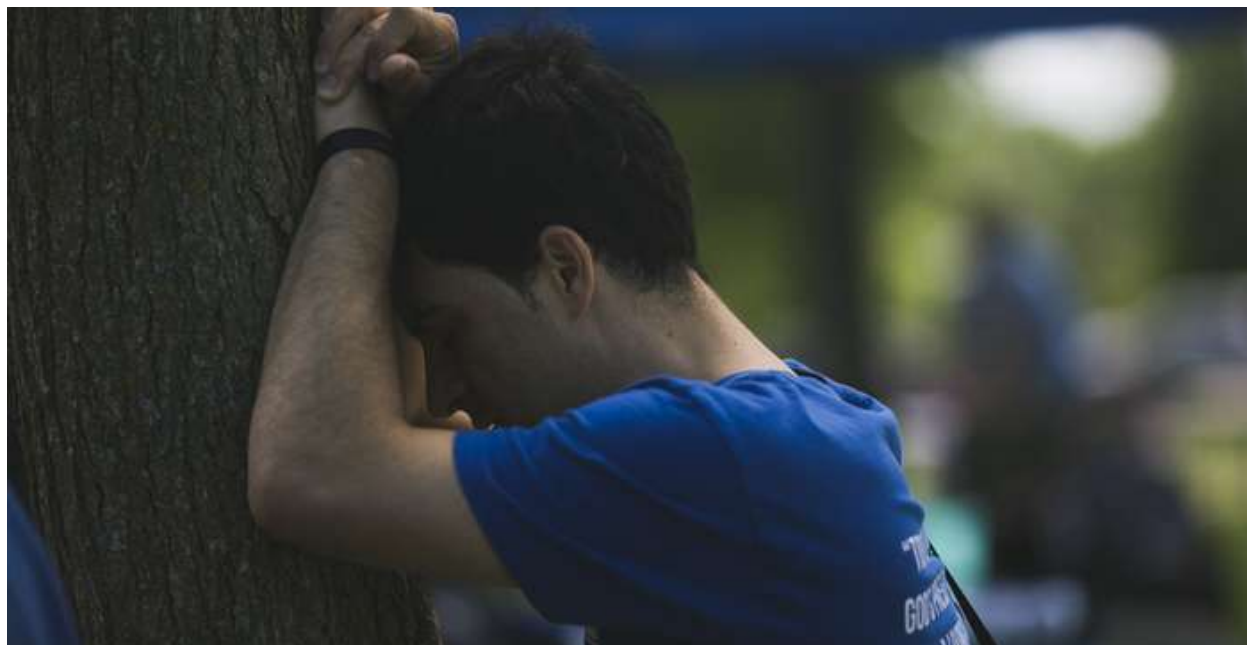
St. Paul, Minnesota



Praising God in St. Paul

On July 27, we went to St. Paul, Minnesota, which gave us the opportunity to visit the Korean War Memorial, honoring the 750,000 veterans from Minnesota who passed away during the Korean War. Ed Valle, a veteran, met the group there to talk about the history of the war, and presented us with a photo book, which he signed with thanks for Reverend and Mrs. Moon. "Korea is tremendously grateful to America," he said.

Then we went to the nearby Holy Ground in St. Paul. Ben Pehling, the youth pastor in St. Paul, prayed, "We wish to lift You up and bring peace and prosperity. Without You, we are powerless to lead this nation back to faith. Guide us with your love and lead us when we go astray. Bless the God's Hope for America pilgrimage as we make the nation of America Your nation."



We gathered around the tree at the St. Paul Holy Ground to pray

St. Paul Photo Gallery on Facebook

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Fargo, North Dakota

When True Father came here in 1965, it was -16 degrees. The camera man in the video footage of that day can be heard saying, "It is cold!" Although the air was cool and crisp, the warmth of our song filled the crowd, and we had nothing to complain about at the Holy Ground atop a hill spotted with pine trees. Theo Kirkley read a prayer by Bishop Ron Stovall, Evangelical of California and minister who has gone to Korea with 174 ministers to support Father and Mother Moon.



The Fargo community and bus travelers join together in cheers for the victory of God's Hope for America



Ed Valle provides a tour and history of the Korean War memorial

Fargo Photo Gallery on Facebook

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Sioux Falls, South Dakota

On July 28 we met in Sioux Falls, South Dakota at Sherman Park atop a hill, at the site of a Native American burial ground that is 1600 years old. We could feel the vast history of that spot, the heaviness of the Native American struggle yet the lightness of their simple and pure connection with nature, as we overlooked the immense plains of South Dakota. A Native American gift was offered to Father and Mother Moon by the local community—a handmade dream catcher.



As True Father always chose the highest places for Holy Grounds, we gathered atop a hill overlooking the land in Sioux Falls

Dennis Hoffman read an excerpt from Father Moon's "God's Hope for America" speech, one that we have been reading over the course of this entire trip. Then, representatives of different faiths shared words of encouragement and support, including Rev. Hakim Kane, representing all Protestant churches, and Father Felix from Iowa, representing all Catholic churches. In the end, we are all representing brothers and sisters who love our Heavenly Parent, currently gathered in South Dakota to build the kingdom of heaven on earth together.



The community in Sioux Falls, South Dakota prepared seats for True Parents at our lunch picnic, and we felt their presence with us

Sioux Falls Photo Gallery on Facebook

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Sioux City, Iowa

In Sioux City, Iowa, Lori Mason and Halona Porr opened in song with a beautiful rendition of Song of the Garden. Their heavenly harmonies and angelic voices brought a sense of peace within and among us all. Margaret Jessen shared the history of Iowa, a state between two rivers where immigrants from Norway and Germany came, in search for God. She explained the interfaith background of the state, and stated, "If people only focus on benefiting their own people alone, we can never have victory."



A beautiful rendition of Song of the Garden in Sioux City, Iowa



Sang Moo Borneman, the Korean teacher on the God's Hope for America bus, gives a testimony at the Sioux City Holy Ground

Sioux City Photo Gallery on Facebook

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Omaha, Nebraska

In Omaha, our last stop of the day, the sun began to set in the beautiful and peacefully empty Memorial Park. This is not the original Holy Ground that Father Moon established in Nebraska, because a zoo was since built there in Lincoln, but our gathering beneath four huge pine trees with the flickers of the orange sun was among our most beautiful so far.



Omaha welcomes the bus with a human train

Rev. Kathy, a Baptist-Pentecostal minister, preached, “God is everywhere.” She reminded us that, “To those who have much, of much is required.” She spoke of our responsibility to share our blessings and our faith.



Several families greeted us at sunset in Omaha

Then Rev. & Rev. Tuffer, as they called themselves, a couple and friends of Reverend Moon, shared their hearts warmly. Mr. Tuffer said, “We are rehearsing for when we get to where God is. It is going to be holy every day, when we’re with God. We may not always know it, but God isn’t too far away. He’s right here.”



The bus is welcomed by a human train in Omaha

Omaha Photo Gallery on Facebook

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Lincoln, Nebraska

On July 29, we got as close as we could to the original Nebraska Holy Ground. We had a short ceremony of song and prayer outside the zoo first thing in the morning, and then continued on to the next state.



Nebraskans greeted us for a second time in Lincoln, where we got as close as possible to the original Holy Ground, now located in a zoo



We greeted the day with high spirits and song in Lincoln, Nebraska



We prayed between four pine trees at the new Nebraska Holy Ground in Omaha's Memorial Park

Lincoln Photo Gallery on Facebook

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Cheyenne, Wyoming

A sunny morning turned into a rainy day as we drove West to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where we were met by just one local family, and a couple of others who came over from Denver. We learned that even one family can build a church, and it's fitting that the Wyoming family is called the Love family. Every time the word "love" came up in our song lyrics, it felt like we were singing for and about them. Dr. Balcomb reminded us, too, that when True Father came to the Holy Ground in 1965 there were only seven people there, and today there are 70. We could really appreciate the growth of God's Kingdom in Cheyenne.



As we sang, we all moved into the circle and touched the rock that stood at the Holy Ground in Cheyenne



Maria Love read from True Father's autobiography in Cheyenne



The Love family met us in Cheyenne, Wyoming

Cheyenne Photo Gallery on Facebook

[<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.869401419756286.1073741883.833527253343703&type=1>]. As with the *God's Hope for America* page on Facebook, you can tag your friends in pictures and share the posts to help spread the word online as the bus spreads the word on the road!

Denver, Colorado

The rain only got stronger when we arrived in Denver, Colorado, this time met by a very large community beneath the shelter of a huge tent. David Heppell prayed, “God, how precious this location is because it belongs to You.” We read True Father’s words on how a nation exists for the entire world, and we reflected on our responsibility as America, living for the world and for God.



Multicultural music and dance followed our prayer gathering once the rain cleared in Denver

Michael Hentrick prayed for our reclaiming of America for God and connecting to that vision. Then, Mr. Zachum shared a story of George Washington, who felt like he was tallest when he was on his knees,

praying. Father Moon had that same spirit.



We prayed under canopies during a rain storm in Denver, Colorado

Denver Photo Gallery on Facebook

[<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.869868386376256.1073741884.833527253343703&type=1>]. *As with the God's Hope for America page on Facebook, you can tag your friends in pictures and share the posts to help spread the word online as the bus spreads the word on the road!*