

God's Hope for America Bus Tour - Day 40 – Salt Lake City

Michael Balcomb

August 2, 2014



Atop a hill overlooking the greenest of green fields and majestic blue mountains, under the bright morning sun and upon a thick bed of strong green grass, the birds sang along as we opened our Holy Ground gathering (Number 50!) in song.

Dr. Chang Shik Yang joined the bus for the day and shared some inspiration as he introduced himself, giving his blessings and good wishes for the grand finale of the pilgrimage. Mike Stovall, pastor of the Salt Lake Family Church, said a prayer, followed by an interfaith prayer by Rev. Father Elias Koucos, who said, “May we build on our future. May we be the breath of hope. Make our country a source of integrity.”

Mrs. Bonnie Nichols, quoting Father Moon, shared with us that the U.S. was conceived by God, and the tradition of America was set by our forefathers. “In your blood stream are many races mixed together. There’s only one nation like this in all of history. Therefore you can say, ‘This is my country.’ If we forsake our responsibility, we forsake God. True Americans believe in the unity of humankind.”

Mr. Galen Brooks echoed this call, saying, “We have to reclaim this world, and we have to reclaim ourselves. Please remember to keep God in heart, live for the sake of others, and stay away from negative thoughts.”

We then visited Temple Square of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. As we entered, we were surrounded by a flower-filled courtyard. We met our four tour guides who were volunteers from around the world. We were first brought inside of the shiny, circular Tabernacle, a gathering place where the pioneers would come to listen to words of the prophet, Joseph Smith, in conference. The building is round which creates fantastic acoustics to hear the 11,623 pipes of the organ and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra.

We walked outside to stare up at the glorious, castle-like Salt Lake Temple, where one must be cleansed through baptism in order to enter. It was built by Mormon pioneers between 1853 and 1893. One of over

142 temples worldwide, this is where ancestors who have passed away may be baptized on behalf of their living descendants. Marriage is held in the sacred temple, where it can be made eternal.



The early Latter-day Saints left Illinois in 1847 due to persecution. Families were killed by mobs, so they came to Utah to practice their faith freely. Joseph Smith never made it to Salt Lake City, because he was killed in Missouri. Lead by Brigham Young, they continued West, facing numerous trials. The desert was transformed by Mormon pioneers into a sacred land through the grace of God. Due to undying faith, God could provide and the early Mormons experienced miracles in creating their foundation. There are no crosses in sight because the Latter-day Saints want to remember the resurrection of Jesus.

We also had some time to visit more of the numerous buildings and libraries in the Square. Then, driving toward Boise, Idaho, we made a stop in Southern Idaho at the Shoshone Falls, 212 feet high and 900 feet wide, feeding water into the Snake River and the immense canyon below. In this place, one of the most beautiful rest stops of the trip, we were inspired by the beauty of America and its potential to be a powerful and inspirational nation for the world.