

TribeNet 2020 for Tribal Messiahs, Who Evangelize Their Tribes Held in New York

Demian Dunkley
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Two years ago, TribeNet officially launched as a gathering of Unificationists, known as Tribal Messiahs, who actively evangelized among their tribe -- family, friends, coworkers, and the greater community -- to bring God's Word into homes and neighborhoods. Today, it's grown into a network of hundreds of families sharing weekly testimonies and Tribal Messiah activities, inspiring even greater nationwide evangelism in the U.S. A recent 2020 TribeNet conference, 'Back to Basics,' attracted more than a hundred participants at the New Yorker hotel in Manhattan on January 10.



"America is losing the spirit of Christianity," said keynote speaker Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, regional chairman of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) North America, which organized the conference. "True Parents came to this God-blessed nation to establish a model of the ideal family. This conference is about going back to the basics, back to the principle and the origin, and breathing new life

into those we reach out to." True Parents is an affectionate term for FFWPU co-founders Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who has been tirelessly working to continue the global peacebuilding legacy of her late husband. The weekend conference, hosted by TribeNet director and emcee Rev. Miilhan Stephens, drew on the early days of the Unification movement.



"I am here today as the product of an incredible amount of love and investment from many people," said 23-year-old Joshua Holmes, director of Young Tribe and assistant co-pastor of Family Church of New York City (FCNYC). "But the person who raised me up, who I believe invested in me the most, is True Mother. Today's youth is the hope for future generations." Dr. Moon, affectionately known as True Mother and the Mother of Peace, has called on families, especially young adults, to advocate for peace and uphold family values. TribeNet espouses these ideals through its outreach efforts.



"For 15 years, Unificationists in Los Angeles built a foundation visiting Bishop Noel Jones and his congregation," said Holmes. "Sometimes they were even thrown out. But slowly hearts and minds changed. We asked the Holy Spirit and True Mother to touch Bishop Jones." Bishop Noel Jones, of City of Refuge megachurch in Los Angeles, has been one of many faith leaders working alongside Dr. Moon

in her effort to unite Christianity and promote world peace as one family under God.

The TribeNet conference comes on the heels of the recent Peace Starts With Me Clery Rally in Newark, New Jersey in December, where more than 600 clergy from around the world convened to bridge Christianity and promote global peace together with Dr. Moon. Much of its success circled back to TribeNet members who reached out to many Christian clergy and churches. "We shouldn't have all these church denominations," said FFWPU-USA President Rev. Demian Dunkley, who gave the presidential address at the conference. "It's the result of human-centered thinking. I'm not interested in knowledge without faith. If I'm just building a bank of knowledge with no faith then there's no space for God there. We still need faith."



Several people shared personal testimonies of their experience doing Tribal Messiah outreach in their communities. A key component of this is the Marriage Blessing Ceremony, given to couples who pledge to live God's ideal in their union, thereby restoring marriage and family life to the way God intended. "I was so moved by going and offering the Blessing from house to house; it was so rewarding," said Rev. Ernest Patton of Washington, D.C., alongside his wife Keiko. "Every family has challenges and obstacles, but the very essence of the Blessing is life-changing. The more we do it, the more it is inspiring and powerful. We saw incredible transformation in our family."

The conference continued Saturday morning with walking tours of holy sites and two Unificationist estates in New York, showcasing East Garden in Irvington and Belvedere in Tarrytown. While both properties have served different purposes over the years for various activities, they offer visitors a peaceful retreat along the Hudson River to connect with the hearts and minds of Rev. and Dr. Moon. The Irvington property, recently declared the Hyojeong East Garden Museum (HJEGM), archives thousands of photos and artifacts of Unificationist history. "This is a special place for many people and holds a lot of memories," said tour guide Paul Fontaine. "Each tour is unique in how it touches people."

The TribeNet conference offered participants an opportunity for education, reflection, and to share messages of inspiration while also providing tools and strategies for practical application and approaches to continuing Tribal Messiah activities in the new year. "I could feel each person's heart and soul throughout this conference," said Jeongeun Choi from New Jersey. "I felt like I was embraced in this atmosphere."

The conference concluded with worship service Sunday morning in the Grand Ballroom of the New Yorker hotel. "I want 2020 to be the year that we harness attendance to God and maintain God's viewpoint, keeping our proper order and multiplying goodness," said Rev. Dunkley. "Let our faith get us there."