

## FFWPU USA Peace Road 2000, Healing the Past: NYC African Burial Site Honored

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As a team of young Unificationists continues their journey across America on the [Peace Road 2020: Reconciling All People](#) national tour, a tributary stop among local clergy and public officials honored an African burial site beneath the Civic Center section of Lower Manhattan in New York on July 31. A large group gathered to offer prayers and messages of peace and reconciliation in Foley Square, near the [African Burial Ground National Monument](#), where more than 400 graves were discovered in 1991.

"We are here to bring remembrance, healing, and reconciliation," said Rev. Juanita Pierre-Louis, co-pastor of Harlem Family Church and senior vice president of [Women's Federation for World Peace \(WFWP\) USA](#). "We want to remember these people and we want to heal them as well. We have to come together and work together to bring reconciliation."

For more than a century, tracts of land under New York City's foundation were designated for enslaved and free black people in an unmarked cemetery where 419 men, women, and children

have been exhumed so far -- making it the oldest and largest known excavated burial ground in North America. Peace Road participants offered inspiring words of healing and liberation as an important part of making peace with the past to bring reconciliation.

"Believing in God, no one is a slave," said one local minister who spoke at the burial site. "All of us seek freedom and happiness, but we also want to atone for what has happened and remove any traces of evil and slavery."

"We must believe that America is the nation God intended it to be," said Dr. Luonne Rouse, national co-chairman of the [American Clergy Leadership Conference \(ACLC\)](#). "But people, sometimes within the presence of God, have done what God does not intend to be. If we want to live in the same realm of heart as Jesus, and as our True Parents, we, too, must find the power within ourselves to forgive the unforgivable."

True Parents is an affectionate term for the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founders of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU). In 2015, Dr. Moon launched Peace Road, continuing her husband's peace-building legacy with a global movement where people of all backgrounds walk, bike, and drive in solidarity for peace. Community leaders from across the city came together to offer their heartfelt prayers at Foley Square, while several performers serenaded the group.



"Love and understanding are the reasons I am here," said one public official representing the mayor's office. "Echoed by the very great U.S. Representative John Lewis, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., famously said, 'The end result and spirit of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation.' Foley Square is a great place to make that clear."