

Peace Road to Mount Galdhøpiggen

«Peace through intercultural understanding»

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The theme of the Norwegian PEACE ROAD was «Peace Through Intercultural Understanding», a relevant theme in our society where the government encourage all kinds of dialogue projects. Representatives from 4 continents and 7 nations participated at the launch on Thursday 6th August.



Participants at the Launching ceremony



Participants from 4 continents sign the Peace Road banner

Our chosen activity in the PEACE ROAD was to travel by car from Oslo to the foot of the tallest mountain in Norway and from there to climb the mountain peak, Galdhøpiggen which is 2469 meters high. We wanted to bring the PEACE ROAD and our desire for peace from the launch in Oslo to this peak as a pilgrimage. And from the very top we wanted to express this desire to heaven. Symbolically speaking, you cannot get closer to heaven than that.

In his speech at the launch, national leader Steinar Murud explained about the PEACE ROAD, talking about True Father's vision of a new international highway and how such a project could bring the world together in a peaceful way.

He also asked the question «how can a trip to a mountain contribute to peace?» He said all progress, even peace, needs a foundation. Without a foundation, nothing is sustainable. Religions always emphasize the need for a spiritual foundation. Upon that foundation God can give blessings. Our pilgrimage, the PEACE ROAD, builds such a foundation. One American guest in the group responded very well to this point – peace needs a foundation and we are making it.

Friday was our travelling day, 370 km and 5 hours drive from Oslo to Lom. However some participants came from other parts of the country and one sister drove 770 km to participate in the tour. A

fleet of cars marked with the PEACE ROAD logo transported the chosen 22 participants to the base camp.

On Saturday morning we woke up to sunshine and a welcoming rainbow, which we interpreted as a good sign for our mission ahead.

There were 21 participants between the ages of 17 to 72 years old, including 10 second generation. We set out on the 4 hour climb together with a professional guide. At one stage we crossed a glacier, walking in a line, connected with a rope. This one hour crossing inspired to contemplation and the theme from one of our holy songs kept coming to my mind; «Now I behold Jerusalem, City of loveliness, gently descending from above ever to be my own» As I was climbing up, Jerusalem was coming down. For me it made sense. As we make efforts, God comes to us.



Crossing the glacier



200 metres from the summit ...

Others in the line seemed to be inspired by holy songs too, as I heard someone in the front start to sing «Grace of the Holy Garden.»

Crossing the glacier was the most contemplative part of the climb. After this, our path became steeper and steeper, crossing hills with large, challenging rocks and finally a steep area of heavy snow that drained the last energy from most of us.



The only blessed couple

Reaching the top was a true relief. After eating our lunch packs we needed to start our program even though one participant was still lacking. Even our guide was sure he would not make it to the top. However, when we started to gather, a shadow appeared in the fog and there he was, our 21st participant. He later said he had never been so exhausted but at the same time he would never be without this experience.



Some of the participants



Mount Galdhøpiggen – highest mountain in Northern Europe

Our national leader offered some words at this end of the pilgrimage. Until now we have carried the desire for peace with us, and now it was time to offer it to heaven. As an expression of this we sang; Urie sowonun tongil, loud and with confidence from this highest point in Northern Europe. Other climbers at the top were watching and applauding. Finally we made a group photo with the banner which we signed at the launch.



Celebration dinner



The oldest participant was 72 years old and the youngest 17 years.

The evening ended with a nice celebration dinner at the base camp with reflections and many songs. One guest expressed how proud he was to take part in this project for peace. For all of us this event was really tiring for the body, but very reviving for the spirit. We do not think we could have brought the PEACE ROAD higher than this. Aju!