

Senegal Testimony for West Country—January 2018 by June Darby

I was really blessed to have the opportunity to go to Senegal, and felt that I was representing you all, so I am happy to share something about the experience.

I have been trying to support Africa for the last few years because I felt that an African country would be the first to recognise True Parents. When I heard about the upcoming Conference in Senegal and that it might be possible to attend I was desperate to go and help in some small way, to make that dream a reality, and I am deeply grateful for the support I received that enabled me to do so.

Senegal is much more developed than many other African countries. There are very few stalls like shack shops on the sidewalks, so most people must be employed, and the roads are in a good condition although not all are tarmacked. Everywhere one looks there are buildings going up, using the ubiquitous cement breeze blocks, yet not all are completed. However there was a lot of building near the airport where an industrial complex is being developed. There is a beautiful, decent sized harbour with big, sleek ferries in port as well as tankers and cargo ships. Recently oil was found and is being transported for sale and no doubt the off shore gas fields that have been found will soon go into production.

Every house I visited had an enclosed courtyard where the outdoor kitchen is found and the washing hung up to dry, no doubt the walls help give protection from all the sand. Dakar is located right alongside a beach. They cook on gas cylinders, even boiling water for washing and drinking. But the hotels did have hot showers and toilets that worked. The people are very kind and hospitable with families co-operating and working closely together. Guests are given sweet, minty tea in delicate, tiny cups accompanied by sweet biscuits.

The weather was very pleasant, deliciously cool at night when the cold wind wasn't blowing and delightfully warm by day. Yet it was very dry and dusty as the rains only fall in summer. Thatched beach shelters give one an indication of the extreme heat in summer.

I was fortunate to attend the Sunday Service in the Training Centre after the Conference ended. The Little Angels caused great excitement when they appeared at the service to sing and they donated their piano. The National Leader, Abdu Gaye, put the events into perspective in his Sermon, and I want to share his sentiments. I really want brothers and sisters to understand exactly what a great victory it was, for a great corner was turned in the Providence in Senegal that gives us all cause for new hope and optimism for our life of faith, our family relationships, and for the success of all our different activities. And there is now much more power and support available from the spirit world. He called it the Miracle of Senegal that gave a New Vision for Africa- a vision that gives Africa a pride in herself, confidence to become independent and to take control of their own destiny, and a vision of a bright new future.

But judging from the responses he received to his query as to what our vision is I think that we all need to heighten our vision, look at the bigger picture. True Father said that our vision should be for the world, for spirit world will support whatever vision it is that we have.

The Miracle that took place in Senegal affects all of us around the world. For the victory of the African Summit in Dakar was a Miracle for Senegal, the World and the Cosmos. The miracle was that all the delegates from all over Africa completely accepted True Mother's proclamation that she was the True Mother of the Cosmos and the only Begotten Daughter of God. Also they agreed to support all the different initiatives put forward by True Mother.

- 1)The development of the Organisation of IAPP in all countries (Parliamentarians for Peace) .
- 2) The Inter Religious Association for Peace and Development
- 3) The Tribal Chiefs' Association for Peace and Development
- 4) The Association for Family Education
- 5) The plans for a Peace Highway from Cairo to Cape Town

Six current National Presidents of State were present, Chairmen of Parliaments, M.P.'s Kings, Chiefs and high level Religious Leaders, including the

President, Macky Sall and all the Senegalese Parliament . Rev Camara and the African National Leaders are really to be congratulated for the incredible effort they all made to fulfil their goal of bringing 14 high level dignitaries to attend the Summit. And I want to humbly express my appreciation for the great effort and indemnity that they must have made to bring such a great accomplishment to True Parents.

Abdu Gaye explained that the Nation of God would start in Senegal, that Senegal was no longer a nation existing just for itself, but was the nation of God and True Parents, and is in fact the bones of God and True Parents! True Father had said before the Conference started that a Miracle would take place in Senegal and that He was mobilising the whole Spirit World to support the Summit Problems existed with communication in the beginning, because of the sheer numbers involved, 600 delegates, who descended on Dakar in the space of 24 hours, and 70 members supporting, but despite the confusion and what seemed like chaos at times, the spirit at the Summit was so open, warm, and embracing, and the hearts of our UPF Team and young 2nd gen with the help of the spirit world melted any grievances or difficulties. The UPF Team and ushers were magnificent, working so hard, right through the night, to establish order and harmony. Personally I helped to make hundreds of badges for the delegates, working all day until my arm felt ready to drop!

True Mother made it possible for the Moslem Leaders to express their frustration at being victimised and marginalised in the sweeping condemnations of Islam being a Religion of violence and aggression because of the activities of Moslem terrorists who try to justify their actions by their faith, when in fact the true nature of Islam is that it is a Religion of Peace; thus paving the way for a reconciliation to take place between Christianity and Islam.

And a most significant event that took place during the Summit was when True Mother liberated the slaves. Before even coming to Senegal True Mother had held a short ceremony in New York with representatives from the U.S.A.. the Caribbean and Brazil - the countries where most of the slaves had been sent. True Mother went to Goree Island, a half hours ride by ferry, to visit the remaining Slave House where slaves were held prior to being shipped away. They were manacled with a 10lb metal ball attached to their ankles to stop

them running away. They were packed into small dark rooms like sardines and I can't begin to imagine how they survived their treatment there. Families were totally divided as they were sent to separate rooms for men, women, girls, boys and babies and never again were together as they were shipped off to different countries. Senegal, being the most westerly point on the West African coast, saw the slaves being shipped to the U.S.A., the Caribbean and Brazil. I couldn't even start to imagine their feelings of total desolation and hopelessness as they passed through the Door of No Return to board the ships. About 20 million Africans were captured and sold off as slaves! True Mother asked for all the African National Leaders to accompany her as well as the European and USA leaders so that the blessing of the slaves' Liberation could be spread by the representatives of all the different countries. True Mother must have seen the reality of the slaves' experiences for she was weeping as she contemplated their situation before liberating all those slaves, and then she sanctified a holy ground there.

The next day when True Mother spoke about the experience of liberating the slaves she expressed her horror at the way so called Christians had treated fellow human beings so cruelly. And I was squirming as she enumerated the suffering and exploitation Africans had experienced at the hands of Europeans over the last 500 years, from slavery to Colonisation. But I could understand that True Mother is concerned to help clear the debt that Europeans have incurred by their wrong actions in Africa by her request that young European 2nd generation should be the ones to serve and support the Africa Summit, and her request that the European countries should support Africa. In particular she has asked Britain to help the Commonwealth countries. My conscience was so uncomfortable that I began to realise that I really needed to begin repenting seriously for the collective sin of Europeans in Africa.

Although I think it is very important for me to repent more sincerely from now on, I do believe that a great condition was made by the liberation to help us all become free of resentments. Patti Fleischman, one of the original missionaries to Senegal, said that God can't work through us if we hold onto resentment. Personally I began to feel peaceful after the Liberation had been completed. And in London, one spiritually open sister from the Caribbean later told me

how she had suddenly felt so happy and light hearted without knowing what True Mother was doing on that day.

Abdu Gaye said that we each need to make the victory of Senegal our own, and that if we have never sacrificed we need to begin to do so now for the sake of the world, God and True Parents. He said that we can all make a miracle happen in our lives and nations if we believe – that it depends on our faith. Kathy Rigney reminded us that our bond of love with True Mother could make miracles happen – that we should give our 100 % effort and not disappoint Heaven. True Father said that Results Will appear when we become one with God's heart and True Parents' heart.

The performance of the Little Angels was so incredibly beautiful that I was moved to tears, and I felt the Love of True Mother for us all expressed through them, through their beauty, harmony, grace and purity as we were transported by their songs and dancing. It was so good to see True Mother smiling, looking happy and inspired at the victory celebration. And when she announced that Senegal would become the new Continental Headquarters for Africa the audience erupted with joy. Some sisters ran onto the stage expressing their excitement through an impromptu dance and song.

As you can imagine, such a great victory for God and True Parents took a great toll of indemnity. The UPF team preparing for the Summit were hit the heaviest. They suffered incredible, heart breaking disasters and difficulties in their families. Also the National Leader of Burundi died in Dakar from a sudden illness as True Mother carried out the Liberation of the slaves on Goree Island, a brother was shot and killed in the Ivory Coast when he withdrew money to send members to Senegal, and another young brother had his neck injured in a car accident. All the STF and 2nd gen suffered from difficult basic living conditions, with many sick from vomiting and stomach upsets. Everyone supporting the Summit paid some kind of price. And the biggest foundation of indemnity was paid by the suffering and persecution of True Parents during their life.

I just want to mention that the victory was only made possible by True Mother's vision and guidance every step of the way. And Heaven was helping,

for the Conference Centre and adjacent hotel were brand new, as was the airport, all in readiness to receive True Mother!

It was wonderful and humbling to be part of such an historic event, that concluded on such a dramatic and victorious note.

June Darby

