

## The culmination of Peace Road 2016 at Imjingak, South Korea

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On Tuesday, August 16, students from sixty-three nations came together to participate in the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) Peace Road at the Imjingak Pavilion, in Paju, Gyeonggi Province. Imjingak is just 4.5 miles (7 km) from the South Korean side of the four-kilometer Military Demarcation Line, which has separated North Korea from South Korea since 1953. Imjingak is a place close to the hearts of those whose families fled North Korea. The elderly still come to perform their ancestral rites as they look north toward their hometowns.

For students from sixty-three nations to have chosen Imjingak as their meeting place is novel. This place symbolizes Korea's broken heart over the long separation between the people of North Korea and South Korea. These young people have walked or ridden bikes to demonstrate their own longing for Korea to be whole again. This attracted Korea's major media outlets, the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), who along with lesser-known media organizations reported on the event. The success of the event would not have been possible without the participation of the one thousand two hundred young people from the Global Top Gun Youth Workshop.



At the Imjingak Peace Road event, Mr. Tae-ik Jeong, president of the Council of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Hu-deok Yoon and Mr. Jong-seong Lim, both members of the South Korean National Assembly; Mr. Seung-pyo Hong, president of the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization; Mr. Hyeong-yeong Lee, vice-president FFWPU-Korea; Mr. Yeon-cheol Kim director of Unification Research Institute; and other distinguished guests participated. In addition, in each Korean city the Ambassadors for Peace Councils organized Peace Road events and the UPF branch managers participated.

### The cyclists' entrance

The event began as cyclists from around the world, who had set out on bikes from Busan on August 9, came onstage and participated in a welcoming ceremony. They cycled around the crowd of young students, coming to a stop in front of the stage and received flower leis from distinguished guests. The riders gave testimonies of their experiences. A Japanese and a Korean university student along with an American professor, Alan Hokanson, spoke.

Professor Hokanson said, "Here at Imjingak, where I can see North Korean land, I feel deeply saddened by the separation on the Korean peninsula. Sixteen nations fought with the UN Forces at the time of the Korean War. Based on Vision 2020, if a hundred and sixty nations from across the globe participate in this Peace Road event, the unification of North Korea and South Korea can become a reality." Following

this, everyone climbed up to the highest point along the barbed-wire fences at Imjingak and sincerely wished for the reunification of the two Koreas.



### Entertainment

Performances were a way to celebrate the success of Peace Road 2016. First young blessed children from Korea danced to "Song for the Day of Unification." Next, a group of FFWPU members from overseas performed an African dance to the song "Waka Waka," which raised the spirit of all the participants. Holics, a K-pop group gaining popularity in Korea, also gave a performance celebrating Peace Road.

Mr. Tae-ik Jeong, president of the Council of Foreign Affairs welcomed everyone. "Today at this event, the fact that young people representing sixty-three nations from each region of the world have come here to Imjingak, a symbol of the separation of North Korea and South Korea, to promote the reunification of Korea and world peace is significant. I am positive that each step and pedal you take here as you walk or cycle near the DMZ will add to the foundation for the reunification of Korea. I find great hope in the future world as I look at all of you who are participating in Peace Road."



### Connecting to True Mother

Mr. Kwang-seuk Song, president of UPF Korea, received the Peace Road flags that had traveled across the world to Imjingak from representatives of Korea, Japan and the United State. He, in turn, passed the Peace Road flags and an offering of ten thousand origami cranes from UPF-Japan, representing their wish for Korean reunification, to Cho Sung-il, director-general of FFWPU International, who received them as a representative of True Mother. These symbolized gratitude, as members offered the honor and result of their Peace Road experiences to True Mother.

### Congratulations

National Assemblyman (NA) Hu-deok Yoon congratulated the riders and marchers by saying, "Today is a historic day because we have assembled here. From Imjingak to Gaesong City in North Korea is only twenty- two kilometers. Through Peace Road, I hope our cheers for the reunification of North Korea and South Korea will spread and travel across the North Korean territory. NA Jong-seong Lim, who had also participated in the recent UPF International Leadership Conference in Nepal, gave high praise, saying, "I give my congratulations to the Korea DMZ Peace Road. All of you here today are true ambassadors for peace."

Mr. Seung-pyo Hong the president of the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization added, "All you who are participating in Peace Road, even in this hot weather, constitute the path to the reunification of North Korea and South Korea and world peace." Director-General Cho gave words of encouragement. He said, "Not long ago in the Philippines four thousand people marched for twenty-one kilometers and in Japan they biked for more than four thousand kilometers for Peace Road.

All around the world people are hoping for the unification of the Koreas. I believe that to the degree that we sweat today, the realization of the unification of North Korea and South Korea and the world will come nearer. Let us all march forward with passion."



### **Symbolic peace gestures**

Afterward, representatives of the foreign students from sixty-three nations recited a pledge for peace. A ceremony to cut, symbolically, the DMZ barbed-wire fence took place and many people signed the Peace Road banner. Students then released doves, symbolizing peace, followed by more cultural performances. Finally, everyone sang "Tongil" for unification before the DMZ tour began.

Though there were some difficulties at the DMZ Peace Road at Imjingak due to the scorching heat, which had been a factor in South Korea for the preceding few days, the young second- and third-generation members were very sincere throughout the event. It was an important providential time in which they could see with their own eyes the separation of True Parents' homeland as they walked and biked along the DMZ. This is also the nation of their faith, which caused many to think deeply as they experience this for themselves.

After the event, NA Lim and the president of the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization discussed sponsoring an international event in the city of Gwangju in Gyeonggi Province similar to our DMZ event. They would invite our young foreign students.

The last leg After singing "Urie So Wonun Tongil," we heard some testimonies from participants. Some of the young second-generation members said it was very difficult and they had even considered quitting, but in the end, they all worked hard together and were able to finish. They even made the determination to participate again next year.

After the event, the Peace Road bikers did a final stretch, essentially to round off the number of kilometers. They began on Seoul's Yeouido Island and cycled forty kilometers to Incheon's Nampo Dam to conclude their trip having traveled a grand total of seven hundred kilometers.

DMZ Peace Road Testimonies Mr. Jeong, president of the council of foreign affairs, a former Korean ambassador to Russia: I would like to express my regards to the Unificationist organizations for their work for the reunification of North Korea and South Korea. At this time, with high tensions between the countries, most groups that began with the goal of reunification have stopped their activities, but FFWPU

has not stopped; it has even increased its activities.

Especially this year, the Citizens Federation for the Unification of North Korea and South Korea has been working with the UN and has received a favorable response from the UN. Sixteen nations participated in the Korean War, and even after the ceasefire, we have maintained close relationships with those countries.

That is why I feel that the proposal to build a fifth UN office in Korea to promote peace has great significance. I have conviction that this Peace Road event held today with civilians, and other events all around the world, will play a big role in the future of the unification of the Koreas and world peace.

Ki-hoon Han, chief of NA Jong-seong's Lim secretariat: To be honest, I was the only person in NA Lim's secretariat that opposed his participation in this event, but his determination to participate was very strong. I felt that in his position as a member of National Assembly it was important for him to treat each religion the same. Thus, I felt that NA Lim's participation in a Unification Church event could cause problems. Nevertheless, after participating in the event today, I felt that this was an important occasion for the sake of the unification of North Korea and South Korea and world peace. In the future, if any more events arise that are held by the Unification movement and you invite NA Lim, I will be the first to agree to and support our participation.