

## FFWPU United States National Assembly in Oakland, California

Michael Balcomb  
June 24, 2014



“This is the chosen time of God!” declared Archbishop George Augustus Stallings at the culmination of the United States National Assembly in Oakland, California, on Saturday, June 24. Pastors from all over the country had gathered there for an inspiring weekend that would kick-start the “God’s Hope for America” bus tour, a journey following the footsteps of True Father when he first came to America, “to unify the body of Christ, touch the heart of Christianity, and create a revival that America would rise and lead the whole world to the Kingdom of God,” as explained by Rev. Michael Jenkins, chief financial officer of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification USA (FFWPU USA).



The assembly was a wonderful opportunity for the pastors to share their experiences and learn from the collective wisdom of others. The one-day ministry seminar was headed by Demian Dunkley, national

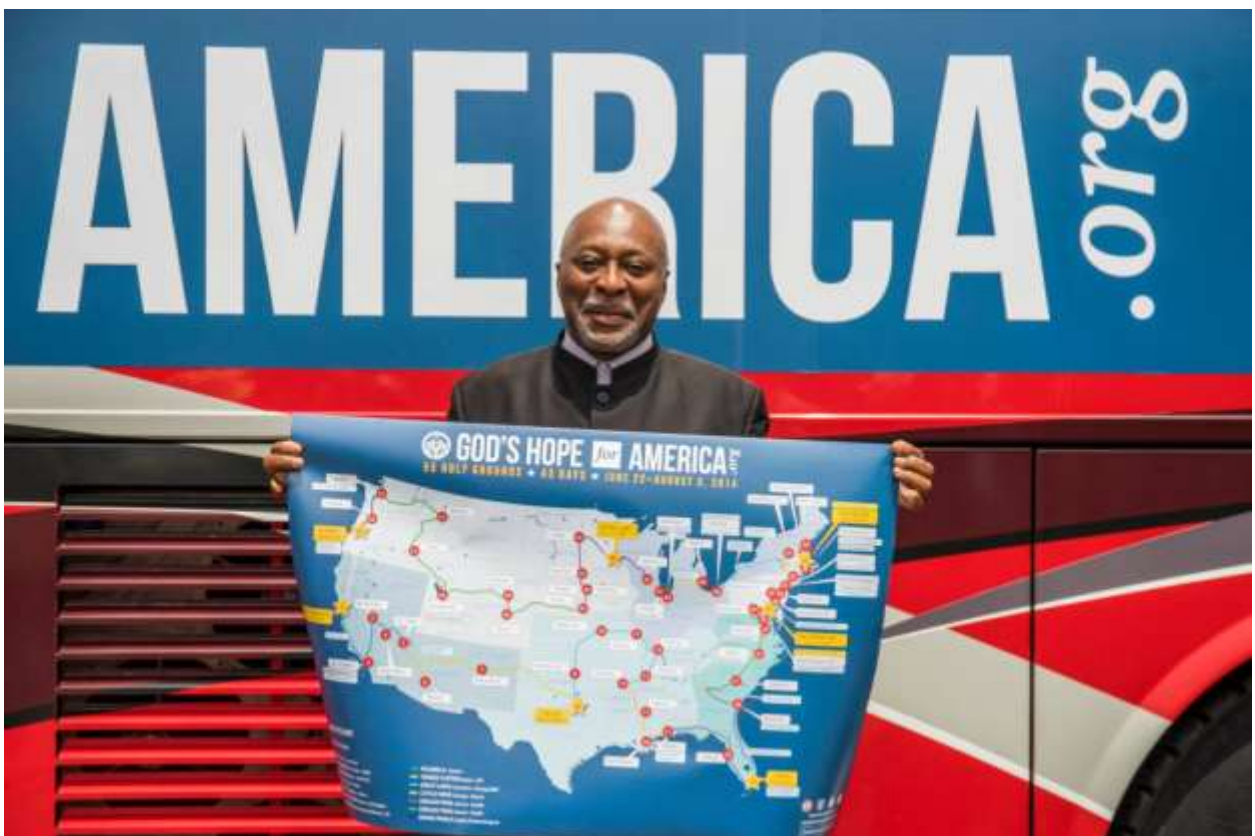


community outreach director for FFWPU USA, and Jaga Gavin, Lead With Impact director, who based the seminar on feedback from Unificationists in communities throughout the country.



“Normally preparation for a National Assembly takes a lot of time,” said Demian. “However, we were already totally maxed out in preparation for the tour and everything else going on. What is amazing is how everyone pulled together with so little time left. I can only say that, thanks to spirit world and the effort of all Unificationists involved, it's been great.”

Rather than a long list of speakers, most of the seminar involved breakout sessions and fellowship. Participants agreed that the highlight of the assembly was hearing the testimonies of their fellow pastors: the things they have learned, how they are working in their communities, and their love for True Parents. All the pastors had been asked to prepare presentations in anticipation of the weekend, and to consider what they wanted to bring back to their community from the conference.



Dr. Michael Balcomb, president of FFWPU USA, in his message to attendees of the National Assembly said: “Within this group of people here are all the answers, all the solutions and wisdom that God needs to



accomplish His Will. Our time here needs to be interactive; every person has something to give or to say for God.”



The pastors attended breakout sessions based on different ministries including Sunday school, youth ministry, Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles, the Blessing and Family Ministry, Universal Peace Federation, Women’s Federation for World Peace and American Clergy Leadership Conference. Participants were able to share what has worked for them and to gain insight and ideas on how to make things better.

For the afternoon sessions the attendees broke up into groups according to the size of their church. This allowed the pastors to discuss real tools and resources to address challenges, and to learn from others’ breakthroughs. They discussed some of the ways in which National Headquarters could support them, including producing some materials and resources. Technology was used as another platform for collaboration through the productivity application Basecamp, which gave the chance to interact with ideas and action steps in a new way.



By the day’s end, everyone was in anticipation of the kickoff of the God’s Hope for America Tour. Taking the tour’s motto, “Remember, Revive, Reimagine” to heart, participants shared fun stories and memories of True Father.

The National Assembly set a wonderful spirit for ushering in the bus tour, and just like the bus that will be making its way across the country, the pastors who attended the assembly will be traveling back to their home communities, bringing back with them a wealth of knowledge and inspiration.

On that final day, In My Father’s House, the San Francisco Oakland Family Church band made up of early West Coast Unificationists Joshua Cotter on keyboards, Ricky Joswick on drums and Rob Schwartz on lead guitar, gave a wonderful rendition of Stevie Wonder’s “Higher Ground” but changed the words to

“Standing on Holy Ground” before the equally rousing speech from Archbishop Stallings. He urged all the participants, including a dozen local ministers, to rise up and declare God’s hope for America.



“This tour is going to 55 Holy Grounds, because America must become God’s Holy Ground, God’s sanctuary, God’s dwelling place, where God can be God, and we can be God’s people,” he said. “God’s hope for America is that God will be the center of all of our activity, thoughts and actions—that this will be one family under God.”

After the sermon the attendees went outside to bless the God’s Hope for America tour bus. Then, almost as if by a miracle, a sunbow appeared high in the clouds above us. Surely it was a sign that God loves and wants to bless America.

