

God's Hope for America Bus Tour - Man of Steel

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A few days ago, as our God's Hope for America (#godshopeforamerica) tour bus sped through the Arizona desert, we decided to watch the 1978 movie "Superman," starring Christopher Reeve, Margot Kidder and a youthful Gene Hackman. A box-office success when it came out, the film was also a great favorite of both the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Hak Ja Han Moon—whom I've long looked to as my True Parents, a man and woman of true, internal steel.

As most people know, the film opens with the future Superman as a baby on the doomed planet Krypton. His birth parents Jor-El and Lara decide the only way to save their child is to send him to Earth, where he will acquire great strength that must, however, be tempered with wisdom and humility. These are provided in equal measure by adoptive parents, Jonathan and Martha Kent, as well as the long-dead Jor-El guiding him from another dimension.

Beyond all the action, and the now-dated special effects, the film succeeds on a human level as an allegory for the supreme importance of parental love of shaping the most important values in life. Knowing of the later tragedy that overtook Christopher Reeve and the sacrificial devotion of his wife Dana, herself a cancer victim, adds even more emotional impact to the movie on a second viewing.

This morning, our Holy Ground Pilgrimage team made an unscheduled stop at the statue of Superman in sleepy Metropolis, IL. In every other way virtually identical to ten thousand small towns across America, the Metropolis town square is dominated by a statue of its most famous, but fictitious resident, the Man of Steel. Our team of pilgrims, with several thousand miles already under our belts, eagerly poured out of the bus for a photo and some shared childhood memories.

Then it was onward across the mighty Ohio River to Paducah, Kentucky, and the Bob Noble park, the 12th Holy Ground on our 48-state, 43-day, 55 holy ground tour retracing the footsteps of the Rev. Moon on his first visit to the United States in 1965.

At the Holy Ground prayer service, Rev. John Jackson, a native of Arkansas now pastoring in Dallas,

reflected on the impact of Father Moon's work over the intervening decades.

Drawing inspiration from the parable of the sower and the seed (Matthew 13) he encouraged me, and the 65 other souls present to reflect on how well the seed of God's Word and principles, as taught by Rev. Moon, is multiplying in our hearts. "God is not satisfied with threefold or fourfold," Jackson said, "but expects forty-fold, a hundred-fold, as the Scripture declares!"

Thinking on all this as we stood in prayer, I found images of Superman crowding my mind again. I couldn't help but reflect that the world needs more than ever is men and women of *spiritual* steel, tempered by hardship, for sure, but still sharp and alert to the living presence of God in this world, and determined to fulfill his dream for America and ourselves.

Is our Unification Movement in American still like that today?

I'm willing to concede that the pressures of the world have had a corrosive effect on our faith, over the years, dulling the shine of enthusiasm under a patina of rust. Writing 60 years ago in his seminal work *Christ and Culture*, Yale theologian H. Richard Niebuhr said that finding renewed relevance for the Christian message – and all religious messages—in our hectic modern times is perhaps *the* challenge faced by the faithful. I can tell that our children and grandchildren, some of them right here with us on this bus, are watching closely to see if we can recover our first love.

On this exciting pilgrimage, I am more convinced than ever that our Unification community is ready to polish our spirits to be bright-shining once again. We must renew our joyful testimony to Rev. Moon's teaching of the *Divine Principle*, a teaching which sheds new light on the Bible, reveals our Heavenly Parent's undying love for all his children, and promises a bright future for the United States and the world!