

God's Hope for America Bus Tour - Day 17 – 60 of us, including God

Michael Balcomb
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It was a bright and beautiful day when the God's Hope for America tour bus arrived in Savannah, Georgia. They were welcomed by fellow Unificationists at the visitor center and city train museum with boiled peanuts, moon pies and cold drinks. Boiled peanuts, a novelty for many emerging the bus, are southern snacks especially popular throughout Georgia, Mississippi and Florida.

Instead of only the expected five or six people coming in from Hacksonville, Florida and South Carolina, five Unificationists showed up to represent Savannah. The Pfeiffer family has lived there for years running Bonsai Beginnings, their bonsai tree farm established in 1992. Lebon, originally from South Africa, was stationed there for a few short weeks a few years ago while in the US Army, only to return just in time for the tour. Along with her were two other Unificationist-born youth from South Africa, who had gone to school in Korea and just arrived three weeks ago! Several Unificationists also came from Red Hook, New York while heading toward Florida for a visit, and another family from New Jersey also happened to be passing through to attend their son's graduation from boot camp at Fort Benning, Georgia. Rev. Lebou Mothapo, who has been coming regularly as the faithful guardian of the Holy Tree and Ground, arrived in traditional South African garb. Including the 31 people from the bus tour, they had a grand total of 59 attendees at the Savannah Holy Ground! And, of course, Dr. Balcomb offered more encouragement: "It was 60 including God, our Heavenly Parent."

At the Holy Ground in Savannah, they had a glorious time of testimonies offered by Senators Donzella James, Rev. Steen Miles, and Mary Jane Dupres. Senator Donzella James of Georgia's District 35 spoke on the irony of Georgia housing several huge fortune 500 companies: "The port of Savannah is where they brought the slave trade direct route to America. We have overcome slavery, but we still have so many isms to overcome..." And in testifying to the vision of God's Hope for America, "You can look at all the interpretations of the Bible of the Divine Principle...and they all say the same thing. That True Father and True Mother are here." Mary Jane Dupres, the first Unificationist in Savannah, offered more on the Holy Ground itself, the first trip to which was taken on August 13, 1972.

Following the testimonies, they went to the First New African Methodist Church, headed by Bishop Estella Edwards Shabazz and her husband, Pastor Yusuf Shabazz. Bishop Shabazz is actually one of the city commissioners representing District 5, and testified that they had taken part in the Million Family March and was particularly inspired by the marriage portion. This day also just so happened to be their 24th wedding anniversary! Such a heartfelt testimony demanded no less than songs, laughter and tears. Bishop and Pastor Shabazz have also been making efforts to receive a proclamation from the mayor of Savannah proclaiming today, July 7, 2014, as God's Hope for America Day and fully recognizing the efforts of True Father. The proposition has been received from Chatham County and is currently on its way!

The eventful day concluded at the church with a hearty, authentic southern meal of chicken, mashed potatoes and salad with iced tea, with every bit as much southern hospitality. They also stopped by the lulling Savannah River where they met 30 children from a Wisconsin-based youth group who all crowded around to receive buttons and bookmarks and take photos with the group and the bus.

God's Blessing certainly showered down upon Savannah Georgia on this day!