

God's Hope for America Bus Tour - In My Father's House

Michael Balcomb

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Today, July 17 was a long day on the God's Hope for America holy ground pilgrimage. Despite getting up at 4am to miss the rush hour traffic, we got lost and ended up a few minutes late for the Holy Ground sunrise prayer service in Central Park. By 7am, we were taking the subway down to the 9/11 memorial for a welcoming rally with local ministers and New York City officials. Right after that we went back to Central Park to join the "Cycle for Peace Program" and then back south once again to Midtown and the New Yorker Hotel for lunch.

By the time our God's Hope for America pilgrimage arrived in Westchester I felt a lot like a camel driver seeing his first oasis in a month. How pleasant it was to be greeted by old friends, and walk in the cool halls of East Garden, True Parents' place of residence for more than 30 years while in the states. There we offered prayers and a greeting to Mother Moon, now in Hawaii, and Father Moon, now in heaven.

For many in our group, it was their first-ever opportunity to visit the place True Parents' "home", to see how and where they lived while in the states, to pray at their holy ground, and to soak in the atmosphere.

"This place was like a home to Father Moon, his office, and his church," explained Mike McDevitt, who worked with True Parents for 40 years and now serves as facilities director. "It was here that they prayed and here that they shed so many tears over the decades."

After prayer at the East Garden Holy Ground, and a tour of the old house, we all went on down to Belvedere, the former Seagram Estate just a half-mile down the road where True Parents taught us, prayed for us and cried for us and for America. One of the highlights of our evening there was the opportunity to honor Teddy Verheyen, a sprightly Dutchman now in his late 70s who was there with True Father in 1965 when the holy grounds were first established.

After the formal prayers and holy ground service was over, I felt an urgent need to get on my knees at the Belvedere holy rock. The last time I came here for serious prayer was back in August 2012. Father Moon lay

unconscious in a Korean hospital and for two of the longest weeks of our lives, we prayed and fasted desperately for a miracle that never came.

Afterwards, I was angry with God, angry with the church, and most of all angry with myself. Suddenly, I realized with crystal clarity that a lifetime of experiences with my Father Moon was over, and that I would never see him again.

But I was wrong.

Once again, I felt Father Moon's living presence at Holy Ground, and experience I have come to treasure more and more powerfully each day. His love for us and his love for America and the world are not dimmed at all by his passing. When I finally opened my eyes and my heart, he was right there all along.

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