

The Northeast Harmony Tour Day 9

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The next stops on our tour were Harlem and Queens. We got to the Harlem community about 40 minutes early, which was a good thing because we needed to circle the block around 7 times before we found a parking spot. We then made our way to the Harlem Family Church building and took a tour of the building before settling into a nice family lunch. We were planning on having lunch in the living room, where they had couches and chairs set up. I insisted that we eat lunch in the large eat-in kitchen, which reminded me of an old Italian farmhouse kitchen looking out into the rear lawn. It really felt like a family meal.



After lunch, we moved over to the living room for a small, intimate gathering. We walked through the presentation about True Mother's vision, and because it was a small group, we were stopping to have discussions, ask questions, and work as a team to make True Mother's vision possible.

I was deeply moved by Juanita Pierre Louis' account of the plight of black women historically in America. She articulated step-by-step a typical scenario of abuse that black women had to endure in times of slavery. In the moment, I could feel that she was serving as the voice for those women whose pain had been largely forgotten.

TO SEE SOMEONE VOLUNTEER TO REPRESENT HER ANCESTORS IN THIS WAY,
TAKING ON THEIR HISTORY OF SUFFERING WITH THE DESIRE TO COMFORT
THEM, TAKING ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITY, WAS SO MOVING.



Juanita Pierre-Louis shares about the historical suffering of black women in America

In Brooklyn the previous night, Pastor Darryl Clarke had talked about the upcoming Africa Diaspora Leadership Conference. The purpose of this conference is to reconcile the rarely spoken about pain inflicted upon the African people by African people, with Africans sending other Africans into slavery. Before we seek to resolve the conflicts between white and black people, Pastor Clarke insisted, the pain

within the African-American and African communities must be relieved.

So when I heard Juanita talk about the history of black women--perhaps the people who have suffered the most in America--I was reminded that we, as Unificationists, have incredible power. We can come to the table with a mindset not just as individuals--when we talk about fallen nature or individual sin or original sin--but also as a collective group of people. When we talk about our collective responsibilities, a whole new area of opportunity opens up for us. Because we love God and True Parents, because we know where we stand, we can learn to be honest about what happened, how we treated each other in the past, what we can do to truly heal those parts of history that we can't escape today, and move forward toward the future together. There is no better example of this than True Mother, who offered prayers of liberation in Gorée Island and at a concentration camp in Europe.

NOT ONLY DID TRUE MOTHER LIBERATE THE ANCESTORS WHO HAD SUFFERED, BUT SHE ALSO ENCOURAGED US TO ASK OURSELVES, "WHAT IS IT THAT WE CAN REPENT FOR AND AND LIBERATE EACH OTHER FROM?"

Harlem Unificationists reflect on community meeting

As in every other location we've visited in this tour, I felt that this is such a key conversation and key part of not only our journey but a key part of the responsibility of our ministry in the northeast. All in all, it was wonderful meeting with the Harlem community. There were two women from the Ivory Coast, both carrying a small baby in their laps. The kids were absolutely perfect through the entire way of our meeting. Babies often end up interrupting prayers, hoon dok hwaee, and study sessions. But apparently, we lucked out and the kids were well-behaved. We really felt that we took a piece of Harlem back home in our hearts.



We then made our way to Queens and now, with the weather changing, we could really feel spring in the air. We walked around the neighborhood and enjoyed the cherry blossoms, spending some extra time with Pastor John Kung before the meeting. Again, there was a very diverse group of people in the Queens community during our meal. John Kung described it as a Chinese banquet meal. I then asked each person there one question: "What are you excited about right now?"

After that, we went through True Mother's vision and our plans for the northeast subregion for 2018. The community was inspired. Everyone came up to offer something to contribute to the northeast subregion. But this was also the first time the pastor stood up and said "You know what? This is such important providential work that the church should contribute to something to this region." He then pledged money from the community itself. We felt a lot of love from their gift and we felt that this is really a new team being built, as we've felt throughout this tour. As usual, the meeting was a very deep time and we stayed as late as anybody needed, ending around 11:30pm.

An overview of meeting with the Queens community

It's amazing that even in a city like New York, each community has a distinct flavor, atmosphere, and spirit. We are continuing to enjoy this incredible tour, and cannot wait to visit the rest of the communities.