

## Unificationists of Peace Road – Armenia 2016 climbed Mount Aragats

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Unificationists of the project “Peace Road – Armenia 2016” decided to climb the Southern peak of Mount Aragats, the tallest mountain in modern Armenia. Peace Road refers to a global project based on the enduring vision of the founder of the Family Federation, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, in which the world is physically connected through an international highway of peace.

The 23 Unificationists who honored Rev. Moon’s vision in Armenia began their trek from the famous lake at Mt. Aragats, Lake Kari, which is located 3250 meters above sea level. On a perfect morning in the light of the bright sun, young Unificationists began their climb for peace. After 2 hours of walking, the Unificationists reached the foot of the mountain. They came to a halt when they saw the remains of glaciers. The glacier protected them from the sharp, cold wind. The participants were enthusiastic, unaware of the surprises that awaited them.

The second part of the journey was a real challenge for the Peace Road participants. The small, light clouds the climbers had admired at the beginning of the road suddenly turned grey and ominous. As the Unificationists came toward the end of their climb, the path abruptly became steep, stones and earth pouring down under their feet. The piercing wind and hail exacerbated their already difficult situation. The climbers could no longer immediately return to the bottom of the mountain as some of them had desired.

Nonetheless, through teamwork, the group managed to climb all 3879 meters of the Southern peak of Mt. Aragats. Despite their exhaustion, the participants of Peace Road were rejuvenated in their hope for the world afterward.



Although they could have admired the indescribably beautiful view of the crater and the other mountain peaks, the weather complicated their plans: the air temperature was below zero, icy gusts of wind were painful, and hail was rampant. The walk down the mountain was fairly steep and much longer. A huge dark cloud covered the sky, pushing each participant to walk faster, as it is more dangerous walking down amid fog. Although the group hurried with all their efforts, the storm cloud caught up with them and tormented them with rain and hail all the way. Despite the tumultuous weather, the Unificationists did not surrender. Instead, they joked and encouraged each other.

The more challenges the group faced in nature, the closer everyone became by helping each other each step of the way. When they finally returned, the participants were freezing and soaked to the skin. Yet what stood out most to them was the satisfaction in completing the climb and continuing Peace Road.

There is an Armenian legend that says that St. Grigor Lusavorich the Illuminator climbed to the top of Mt. Aragats to pray, and at night his path was lit by a lamp hanging in the sky. According to the legend, even now, this lamp shines at night, but only the chosen can see the light. It appears that amidst the dark clouds, the rain, and the hail, the Unificationists never lost sight of the light as they walked for peace.