

Mother of Peace
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes
A Memoir by Hak Ja Han Moon
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The Bright Continent

When you go to Africa, you will see it is rich in red and yellow hues. Some areas are covered in fertile, red soil, and others with ocher-colored sand. I have been told that Africa means "mother" or "sunlight" in different languages.

Unfortunately, multitudes of Africans still struggle to acquire the basic daily necessities. European colonizers exploited Africa's riches and did not invest effectively in its development. Even some who strongly believed in God enslaved and enchained their fellow human beings, considering them bereft of a soul. Too few lent a comforting hand or helped them find a way to live. And still fewer gave them words of Christ's love and hope of salvation.

The sense of profound grief I felt when I first stepped onto African soil in the 1970s remains in my heart. Over the years, my husband and I sent missionaries to Africa. Rather than invest in building our own churches, these missionaries worked to assist the local population by erecting schools, opening clinics and building factories. Their gallant efforts were humble contributions in helping to better the lives of others. Nonetheless, their altruistic endeavors did not answer the questions on everyone's minds. Africans would seek out Unification Church missionaries and pastors and ask:

- Why do we have to live in such misery?
- When are True Parents coming to see us?
- Do True Parents truly love us?
- What do True Parents think about Africa?

When these heartfelt words crossed oceans and reached my ears, I felt called, and I answered by going to Africa. However, despite my best efforts, it was difficult to meet and speak with everyone I wanted to see, and address the myriad complex circumstances afflicting each nation or tribe. Africa's complexity is evident in the multiplicity of faiths, ethnicities and languages throughout the continent - French-speaking Africa, English-speaking Africa, Islamic Africa, Catholic Africa, and more and more, overlaying the histories of conflicts among tribes. I prayed: How can I help heal this continent's wounds and bring harmony and oneness of heart? As the decades passed, we built the foundation to bring together public-sector and private-sector leaders of several nations, including traditional chiefs and religious leaders, to discuss interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values.

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I cannot forget the date, January 18, 2018, the day we held the inaugural 2018 Africa Summit at the Abdou Diouf International Conference Center (CICAD) in Dakar, Senegal. The theme and our hopes were ambitious: Building a Heavenly Africa through Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values. His Excellency Macky Sall, president of the Republic of Senegal, and several former heads of state and prime ministers, as well as current cabinet ministers, parliamentarians, religious leaders and leading figures from every sphere of society, attended the Summit. From Algeria in the north to South Africa in the south, 1,200 representatives from 55 nations gathered. The Universal Peace Federation was hosting its largest ever summit in Africa.

While Koreans back home battled freezing winds and heavy snow, West Africa was blessed with warm breezes and the equatorial sun. When I stepped off the plane in Dakar, the sons and daughters of Africa welcomed me with great enthusiasm, holding my hands with tears of joy.

Following my keynote address at the Summit, many of our non-profit organizations' transformative initiatives that were actively underway in Africa were introduced, including the Sae-ma-eul (New

Village) Movement, the International Peace Highway Project, and the Sunhak Peace Prize. Furthermore, through our sponsorship, the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace, the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development, and the International Association of Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) for Peace and Prosperity were launched.

On the evening of the Summit's plenary, the Little Angels of Korea held a special congratulatory performance. Mesmerized by the songs and dances, the audience cheered and applauded throughout the performances of the Drum Dance, the Fan Dance, the Folk Wedding Dance and Arirang. People were moved to tears when the Little Angels sang the Senegalese National Anthem in their language and Senegal superstar Ismaël Lô's hit song "Dibi Rek ." Everyone was uplifted, and a profound sense of brotherhood and sisterhood permeated the hall. Loud shouts and laughter heightened the sense of hope and joy felt by everyone.

It was just the next day that I took the ferry to Gorée Island, which lies off the coast of Dakar, to offer a prayer for the liberation of Africa from the historical pain and suffering caused by the scourge of slavery.

God's embrace ends all tears

Before 2018, I had never heard of Gorée, as it is located thousands of miles from Korea. However, as our World Summit Africa 2018 approached, I forged a profound relationship with the island and its history.

The bean-shaped island of Gorée is now a tourist attraction drawing visitors from all over the world. As the ferry sailed from Dakar Harbor across the azure sea, tourists from various countries, enthralled by the scenery and atmosphere, were chattering in wonder and taking photos. However, an intense pain arose in my heart. I already was feeling that the bitter tears of grief shed by thousands of captives in transit through that island could fill the world's oceans. The beautiful site that we were approaching must be the most sorrowful island in the world.

Dakar is located along a continental protrusion on the west coast of Africa. It is the closest point of transit from West Africa to North America and Europe. This geographical location may be used for good today, but for nearly 500 years it was a linchpin of the transatlantic slave trade, one of history's cruelest and most inhumane episodes.

When European missionaries came to Africa in the name of Christ, the great majority were righteous, but there were also people who failed to remain true to Christ's essence, who prioritized the monetary interests of their respective nations over Jesus' teachings. As European colonizers and their local collaborators exploited the God-given natural resources of Africa, they invested little in educating the people. Instead, they dehumanized and enslaved many of the indigenous people. From the fifteenth century on, European colonial powers flocked to Africa, plundering the continent's resources and enslaving the local populations. Men, women and children were placed in chains, forcibly taken to Gorée Island and shipped off to slavery in Europe and the Americas. While at Gorée Island, captives were chained so heavily that it was nearly impossible for them to walk. They were starved until just before being sold at auction, when they were force-fed a diet of beans so they would gain weight. If they became seriously ill aboard the slave ship, they were thrown overboard into the ocean. The once-peaceful island of Gorée was a slave camp filled with screams, tears and grief.

The slave trade continued for hundreds of years, and it is estimated that more than 20 million Africans were sold into slavery, many passing through the House of Slaves on Gorée Island. No one knows how many innocent lives were lost at sea during the voyages. As the True Mother, it broke my heart to know that such atrocities were committed by many who prayed in the name of Jesus Christ. Knowing these things, I wanted to visit Gorée Island and liberate the historical agony and heartbreak of all the Africans who suffered due to the scourge of slavery.

The throngs of people taking photos of its historic sites easily overlook the reminders of this tragic past. Gorée is a small island, with the seaside easily reached by a 20-minute walk either to the east or west. During my tour, I saw that visitors were impressed by its many European-style buildings. One tourist remarked, "Walking along these cobblestone streets reminds me of European neighborhoods." Another said, "These European houses are so beautiful and full of character."

What is now a tourist site was the epicenter of the West African slave trade. I looked at the beautiful houses built for the European slave traders, and the contrast with the slave camp located barely a hundred feet behind them could not have been greater.

The House of Slaves is a two-story building. The slave traders lived on the second floor, while innocent Africans captured and brought there from throughout the continent were kept on the first floor while awaiting to be boarded onto slave ships. Most visitors and dignitaries tour the second floor, but I spent my

time in the slave cells on the first floor.

The slave house was built with stones and contained cramped, gloomy holding cells. The cells were like caves - dark and damp, with no natural sunlight and ceilings so low that one could not stand up straight. At the end of a narrow corridor with cells on either side was the infamous Door of No Return. The men, women and children who went through this door onto slave ships sailing for the Americas never saw their families again.

Holding onto the frame of the Door of No Return, I shed tears, along with the mayor of Gorée and everyone in our party, as I prayed for Africa to be freed from the pain and resentment caused by slavery. As I stood at that door, I could hear the cries and weeping of countless Africans taken against their will.

My grief increased when I witnessed tourists laughing and joking as they passed by the slave cells. But I also saw families frown and sigh in sadness at the sight of these reminders of human cruelty. One mother leaned over a red brick staircase and offered a tearful prayer. She seemed hopeful that her prayer might contribute to healing centuries of cruelty and misery.

Liberating those who have ascended differs from comforting those who are alive on earth. Both are possible through the earnest prayer of God's only begotten Daughter, who carries the mission to save humanity. Facing the silent, grieving walls of the House of Slaves, I forever broke the miserable chains of Africa's oppression.

The anguished cries of Africans should be heard and their plight embraced. Humankind's long, painful history of exploitation and deprivation of freedom must come to an end. This was my motivation as I traveled thousands of miles to come to Gorée Island and walk in this still pitiable and sorrowful land of Africa. Having seen the slave cells and the Door of No Return on the first floor, I did not take the stairs going to the second floor where the slave owners lived. I instead made my way to the courtyard. There, together with Gorée Island Mayor Augustin Senghor and his wife, and many local officials, I offered a prayer for the liberation of all Africans who died as victims of slavery.

A short walk from there brought us to a small square. Along one of the yellow-painted walls were several small plaques honoring eminent leaders who had visited the island, including Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama, Mother Teresa and John Paul II. As they unveiled a plaque with my name and read the inscription, Mayor Senghor said, "This doesn't fully embody how grateful and indebted we feel, but it will stand for eons as an enduring symbol of the precious heart you have brought here." Many among the crowd expressed their thanks to me for liberating Africa from the weight of 500 years of suffering. It was a heartfelt token of appreciation from the people of Senegal and, I felt, the continent.

Following the unveiling, the Little Angels moved everyone to tears with beautiful Senegalese songs they had learned and rehearsed over many hours. As we made our way to the pier to depart, I told the mayor I wanted to leave a gift behind that would benefit the whole island. When we reached the pier, we could hear the sound of a motorboat approaching. It was a water ambulance I had prepared as a gift to Gorée Island for passenger and emergency patient transport. Christened with the name Victoria, it reflected our common hope that, although innumerable lives have been lost over the centuries, no others will be lost for the lack of a medical boat.

In Africa, the plight of many remains bleak. Despite abundant natural resources and wondrous scenic beauty, poverty is rampant. Nevertheless, Africans are kind, compassionate and diligent. God has called the peoples of Africa to shine as bright, immutable, heavenly creations. Africans make me feel the heart of our Creator, our Heavenly Parent.

The mother nation

Whenever we hold an event at our Chung Pyung complex in Korea, thousands of Japanese Unificationists participate. I am always concerned, because incredible logistical support is necessary to welcome and host anywhere from 3,000 to more than 6,000 members at this site, our original spiritual homeland. But from their side, Japanese members feel it is a joy to visit their spiritual homeland of Korea. They treasure prayer at holy grounds, such as Bomnaetgol in Busan, where Father Moon built his first church out of discarded military ration boxes and mud. They value the Cheongpa-dong Headquarters Church. For many, it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and honor.

The sight of thousands of devout Japanese members coming to Korea provides a glimpse of a great spiritual wave that I believe will bring positive change to Asia. Asia is considered the continent of the future for many reasons, one of which is that it is where the Unification movement's revival and expansion are most dynamic. Japan was the second country in which the Unification movement developed. Mission work began in dramatic fashion when, in July 1958, Missionary Choi Bongchoon boarded a ship in Busan headed for Japan. His mission work was an endless marathon of hardships. Entering the country without a proper visa, he was arrested and incarcerated, then hospitalized. Finally

gaining his freedom, Mr. Choi broke through when, at 7:15 p.m. on October 2, 1959 in a crumbling attic in Tokyo, he led the first public Unification Church of Japan Sunday Service. Over the 60 years since then, the Unification Church has expanded throughout Japan.

Nonetheless, theirs has been a tortuous course. Accusations of being a cult were incessant, and ferocious opposition from Japanese communists arose in reaction to our Victory Over Communism activities. When several celebrities participated in our marriage Blessing Ceremony, some in Japan felt threatened by the expansion of our movement, and they fiercely opposed us in the media. For decades, my husband could not enter Japan. Some of our beloved members even lost their lives. A major assault on religious liberty was allowed when Japanese authorities turned a blind eye to criminals kidnapping our members, holding them captive until they renounced their faith, and even committing them to mental hospitals. Despite such hardships, the Unification movement in Japan has grown steadily, and the society now is recognizing the wrongness of such treatment. Our movement is a shining light for Japanese society. It also has sent thousands of missionaries throughout the world. They have invested themselves wholeheartedly in teaching the Divine Principle and serving local communities.

Prior to the 1990s, two groups of Korean immigrants living in Japan shunned each other over ideological differences. They coalesced into two organizations, Mindan, the pro-democracy Korean Residents Union in Japan, and Chongryon, the pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan. The fact that citizens belonging to the same "Korean people" separate themselves from each other like water and oil was a great shame. As we engaged in Victory Over Communism activities, we forged ties even with Chongryon and invited its members to visit South Korea. Initially they viewed us with suspicion, but when they saw the sincerity of our offer, they joined the tours. Many among them eventually distanced themselves from communism. In the summer of 2018, at the Saitama Super Arena in Tokyo, we held the Rally of Hope and Resolve to Advance God's Providence in Heavenly Japan, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Japanese movement. During my address, I called Japan and Korea to go forward hand in hand for the sake of the future. I exhorted the two nations to unite in heart and complete the Korea-Japan undersea tunnel linking the two nations and the world through the International Peace Highway.

Since the 1960s, I have visited Japan whenever possible to meet members, share personal stories and encourage missionaries. I have spoken publicly at hundreds of gatherings in various cities, including Tokyo, Nagoya, and Hokkaido, sharing God's word.

Nagano, which once hosted the Winter Olympics, is a Japanese city that has touched me in a special way. The Nagano Unification Church initially consisted of a small church with a few dozen members. Through my constant encouragement, the church grew steadily. Next to the beautiful, cozy church building is a small training center that they named "Hwarang." The local members gave this name in honor of the noble spirit that guided elite young leaders of Korea's Silla Dynasty. Moved by the members' dedication, I visited the church, encouraged the members and asked them to bring God's will to fruition there. I also planted an apple tree in their backyard, and when I visited the church again a few years later, the tree had grown magnificently and was bearing delicious apples. Just like the apple tree, the words I have sown in Japan have multiplied and are now bearing many beautiful fruits.

I blessed Japan to now arise as "Heavenly Japan," a Japan in which society and culture are reborn. Tens of thousands of Japanese men and women have found new life in the bosom of God through True Parents. Every year, many of them cross the Korea Strait to visit the homeland of their faith. This convergence of members makes our HJ Cheonwon campus a bridge of harmony between two former enemy nations.

My heart is especially with Japan during natural disasters and other difficult times. During the great earthquake of Tohoku, the Kumamoto earthquakes and the floods in Okayama Prefecture, countless lives were lost and the damage was overwhelming. When such calamities occur, I offer my condolences and wholehearted support. In the context of God's global providence, True Parents blessed Japan as the mother nation. A mother gives everything to her children unconditionally. Just as a mother goes without sleep to take care of her children, Japan is walking the path of sacrifice with the heart of a mother for the sake of the world.

Love and service in South America

"We are probably worse off than Africa," lamented many of the locals in South America to whom I talked. "Even though we have many resources and so-called democratic institutions, our lives are very poor."

The continent of South America, like Africa, has a history of grief, exploitation and poverty. It was occupied for over 300 years by powerful European countries that subjugated its peoples and appropriated its gold, silver and other resources. Moreover, the Europeans introduced foreign diseases that decimated native populations that had no immunity to those germs.

In the early nineteenth century, South American countries fought for and finally attained their independence, and many sought to establish democracies. But too often, governments became riddled with corruption, and later communist and fascist movements arose and used people's resentments to prop up harsh dictatorships.

All of this meant that untold millions of people suffered and died through human cruelty. The first thing I did whenever I got off an airplane in South America was offer a prayer to liberate and comfort the anguish of those people in the spirit world.

Despite their miserable hardships, I have seen that the South American people lead decent and honest lives, working hard for even a little improvement. They also have a very strong faith in God. Much of the continent is rich with potential, as natural resources are abundant and the weather is temperate. Moreover, South America is a gift from God in that it possesses large areas of unspoiled nature. Anyone who goes to South America will feel a deep affinity for the vast land, abundant natural beauty, and the kind and pleasant people.

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In South America, my husband and I offered continual prayer and devotions, which we call jeongseong. My husband's visit to five Latin American nations in 1965 were the first footsteps of the Unification Church on that continent. In the decades that followed, our missionaries established foundations throughout Central and South America, building churches, witnessing and increasing our membership, working for healthy marriages and families, and connecting these nations to global efforts for peace and reconciliation. Most South Americans are Catholic, while Protestantism is growing there as well. As with other peoples of the world, Latin Americans are open to exploring new pathways of relating to God, and we spread the Divine Principle teachings with all our heart.

The most influential project we invested in there was the educational project we named CAUSA. Father Moon and I created CAUSA in the 1980s because Marxist revolutionaries in Central and South America were gaining influence. For a time, it seemed the entire continent might become communist. We knew that if Mexico became communist, the United States would have to withdraw its troops from around the world to protect its southern border. This withdrawal of US troops would have allowed communism's evil influence to spread in many countries, including South Korea and Japan.

The CAUSA lectures provided a clear critique and counterproposal to communism to thousands of leaders and young people in Latin America and elsewhere in the world. Through this educational series, many former and current national leaders rejected communism's ideology and deceitful calls for revolution.

My husband and I conducted the "True Parents and the Completed Testament Age" speaking tour of six Latin American nations in 1993, and the "True Family and I" speaking tour of 17 Latin American nations in 1995. During those tours, we met the presidents of eight nations. Each one of them thanked my husband and me for halting the advance of communism in their country. On that foundation, we created economic projects to connect Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, with the aim of bringing South America together as one family of nations.

The original beauty of Mother Nature

Our motorboat, which was basically a rowboat with an engine, noisily chugged its way across the deep, blue Paraguay River. Halfway across, one passenger suddenly stood up, and the boat rocked wildly from side to side. The other passengers cried out, fearing the boat would capsize. Just as everyone settled back down, someone yelled, "Ai! What's that?" Before our eyes, a bizarre-looking fish jumped high out of the water and landed on the deck. There it flopped around in the hot sun, jerking its salmon-sized body and gnashing its dozens of razor-sharp teeth. The frightened passengers moved away from it, protecting their legs, as the boatman calmly picked it up with a long stick and tossed it back in the river.

"It looked scary. What is it called?" someone asked.

"It is a dorado," he said, "It's Spanish for 'golden.'"

The dorado is one of countless species of fish peculiar to the waters of Mato Grosso do Sul, one of the mid-western states of Brazil. The Paraguay River, which forms the border between that part of Brazil and Paraguay, is abundant not only in such fish but in every kind of living organism. In the regions of South America that are near the equator, the weather is either a warm springtime or hot summer. Flowers are constantly in bloom, and fruit is abundant for the picking. It is a pleasant land for human habitation in harmonious coexistence with the animal and plant life.

If paradise on earth is defined by having many different creatures living together in a lush, green garden, Mato Grosso do Sul belongs in that paradise. Its vast territory is covered by virgin forest and wetlands. It is ideal for cultivating a farm or caring for an orchard. Enormous trees provide shelter and sustenance for many kinds of birds, insects and animals. The rivers are clean, and some of them are quite clear. There are more than 20 waterfalls, including the famous Iguazú Falls that thunders where Brazil meets Argentina.

Even though it was South America's hottest season, in December of 1994 we brought our senior missionaries from around the world to experience a fishing workshop on the Paraguay River. As the sun blazed on those days, local people would wade into the river and lie in the water to cool off, watching us curiously while we fished.

As beautiful as the Pantanal was, one had to be careful at all times. We would take a boat up the river, dock it and explore the countryside. Sometimes we could barely get through tangles of vines hanging down from enormous trees, and we would have to crawl on our bellies. We often would not return to the boat until midnight. We would rely on a steel cable stretched out through the forest to guide us back in the dark. When we rose before dawn every day to continue, we again would deal with sweltering heat and swarms of mosquitoes. It was a strenuous routine. My most difficult task was bathing. I would awkwardly put up a screen for privacy in the narrow boat, so I could wash myself with the murky river water. But in my heart I welcomed such primitive and natural conditions.

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Near the Mato Grosso do Sul town of Jardim, we built a headquarters for global education, called the Headquarters for the Education of Ideal Families for World Peace, and set up the New Hope Farm to establish a foundation to build God's nation. The local townsfolk told us that an old prophecy predicted that Jardim was where the Lord will come.

The first time Father Moon and I went to Jardim was in late 1994. When we held our first leaders' workshop there, the training center was a rundown storehouse without even bathrooms or a kitchen. I cannot begin to describe how uncomfortable it was, but it was perfect for the experiential education we wanted to provide our leaders. It was a workshop of heart during which participants breathed the warm air and sweated without reserve as they read God's word in the early morning and fished in the midst of the unpolluted and pure original creation.

Over the years, we developed that Jardim site into a lovely family retreat center. We invested in the New Hope Farm that surrounded it. Unificationist missionaries and members from around the world moved there, with the vision of restoring the Garden of Eden that God created at the beginning. We built our community in Jardim with a school so that all these families from all over the world would be able to experience God's love while living in beautiful nature. We donated ambulances to the town, farmed and raised cattle and improved the livelihoods of local people. In the late 1990s, thousands of our members from around the world spent 40 days in study, prayer, and recreation in the natural beauty of New Hope Farm outside of Jardim.

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The Pantanal, which Jardim borders, is the world's largest freshwater wetland area. Lying on both sides of the Paraguay River, it is a paradise on earth. Everything God created in the area has the appearance of the original creation. I am deeply impressed with the thought that this is what the Garden of Eden must have looked like, with the fish and all these animals and plants living exactly as they always have. There are capybaras, crocodiles, wild pigs, and birds such as rheas, all living freely in the wild. In the river you find surubi and pacu, and of course the piranhas that are dangerous even for humans. Many species considered endangered live here, including jaguars, pumas, deer, wolves, otters, armadillos and anteaters. There are also unique trees and cacti. It is the largest wetland in the world and, as a UNESCO world heritage site, it is protected. Thus it is a unique area in which to create an ideal village.

An extraordinary natural environment such as this has its dangers, but at the same time it could be a key region for solving food shortages in the future. We started farming and created a fish farm with a view to improving the local people's livelihoods. One of our ideas was to create a fish meal that could be supplied to boost people's nutrition in poorer areas. We made plans to raise cattle on our ranch and supply beef to as many as 160 countries. To protect the natural landscape, we planted a great number of trees in the land alongside the Paraguay River.

The second area in which we invested is called the Chaco. This remote area is part of the Gran Chaco region that covers parts of Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. In 1999, we encouraged our members to develop a settlement there called the Puerto Leda project. If you cross the Paraguay River at Puerto Leda, moving from Paraguay to Brazil, you're only a couple of hours by four-wheel-drive vehicle from Jardim.

Puerto Leda was the most difficult place to live in the Chaco, yet our Japanese brothers rolled up their

sleeves and worked their hardest. In only a few years, they transformed the area into an ideal village where people and nature live in harmony, a place where anyone would enjoy living. They even built a swimming pool. It is a model ecological settlement, including water purification and fish farming, which was recognized by Paraguay's president, who personally visited the site. We prioritized these projects over building churches, but as the number of people who responded to our members' tireless devotion grew, our faith community also grew.

I wept many times over the pain of the people who lead arduous lives under those spacious skies in Latin America. My heart was torn for the children who craved to learn to write but could not. In the 1970s, when our missionaries from that area expressed how difficult it was to bring God's truth to people who struggle day to day to survive, all I could do was listen and silently pat their shoulders. We would pray together, "We will return here on another day and build a land of happiness. Heavenly Father, please don't forget these people." In the 1990s, God opened the door, and we began to fulfill those prayers.

When we arrived there, Puerto Leda lacked every basic facility. The nearby village needed a school as well as a hospital, and they urgently needed to secure an economic foundation to overcome hunger. Our members all over the world, especially Japan, responded to our call and donated in support of the Leda Project. Nothing can change in a day; yet our members were comforted by the hope they saw in the eyes of the children, and by seeing changes emerge in the hearts of the youth. The new generation of Puerto Leda began to think, "We too can have a good life."

* * *

We keep in mind the need to stop the steady destruction of the ecosystem. We know that, in the name of economic development, we are losing the Amazon rainforest. Overfishing and the rapacious killing of valuable animals for monetary profit also are a serious problem. At the same time, more than 800 million people around the world regularly go hungry. Some South American countries have abundant stocks of beef and wheat, yet they cannot prevent malnutrition. In the midst of our education and community building in Latin America, we conduct plant and animal research on how to best utilize the local resources while protecting nature.

The wings of monarch butterflies span just a few inches, but they migrate 3,000 miles between Canada and Mexico every winter. No one taught them to do this; it is encoded in their nature. Human beings and nature have an inseparable relationship. We can be enlightened about God's act of creation and His mystical truth through nature, which represents Him, only when we live in it, invest in it, and study it. We can feel the infinite joy and love that God felt when He created the earth for us. When we do so, we can live each day with a heart of love and gratitude. The land in which we can learn this truth is Latin America. Through family-oriented love, as one family under God, we can discover our original homeland in this land, God's gift of nature.

The world's parliamentarians share one heart

Nepal has no seashore but having the world's tallest mountains makes up for that. Countless hikers and wealthy tourists visit Nepal, as it has eight of the world's 10 highest mountain peaks and its border passes over the very tallest peak, Mount Everest. But Nepal sits secluded between China and India, and the development of its largely agrarian economy is not keeping up with its neighbors.

When I arrived at the Kathmandu airport in November 2018, two dogs were napping peacefully on the waiting-room floor and nobody was shooing them out. Cars and motorcycles came to a sudden stop because far ahead a cow was meandering along the road. Only after she moved off the road did the traffic start moving again. This is Nepal. Nonetheless, large-scale changes have taken place since Nepal encountered our movement. For example, an amazing event took place in Nepal in 2016, which was an unforgettable year for our movement's peace efforts. In July, hundreds of leaders in the fields of politics, economics, religion and education arrived in Kathmandu from every nation in Asia. These distinguished men and women came to inaugurate the regional chapter of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), a project of the Universal Peace Federation.

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Let me take a moment to introduce the IAPP. World peace cannot come about by human effort alone, nor by the efforts of just a few. Many people, from everyday citizens to high-ranking government officials, need to overcome social class divisions and actively take initiative. Every nation in the world, small or large, has a congress, a parliament or a national assembly. It represents the people of the nation.

Over the years, as I visited nations around the world, I repeatedly urged the parliamentarians who came to meet me to remember the precious mission bestowed upon them by their nation and its people.

I said that when the people's elected representatives put their heads together and focus on what they can

do to solve conflicts, peace will come quickly and naturally. I spoke of a world alliance of parliamentarians dedicated to the search for peaceful solutions. When I did so, parliamentarians would agree with me.

This vision from Heavenly Parent is the starting point connecting the world's parliamentarians as one body. Transcending nation, race and culture, by aligning with the only begotten Daughter, parliamentarians can work together to address the ills that bedevil human life.

As I shared this vision, people close to me tried to educate me about political infighting. They asked, "Will leaders of different parties be willing to gather and cooperate? Gathering influential people and peacemakers is not an easy task," they said, "All the nations' governments are fraught with conflict and strife caused by the divisions among opposing parties." I did not budge. I had not a shadow of a doubt that today's parliamentarians are ready, and I had faith that God would guide each of them to listen to me.

The launch of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace took place in February 2016 at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea. The theme of the conference was "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations." This was the first of a series of such events, one held on each continent, about which I will now say a few words.

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In Nepal in July 2016, under a hot sun, people gathered in great numbers to launch IAPP in the Asia-Pacific region. More than 166 parliamentarians and another 350 observers came from 29 nations. Many Nepalese citizens attended, and the Right Honorable President Bidhya Devi Bhandari personally conveyed her deep gratitude. Those who said it wouldn't work were wrong; the conference was a great success from the start, and many people later expressed their appreciation for IAPP as a much-needed organization.

Following the Nepal conference, we launched the West African regional IAPP in August 2016. More than 600 people from 24 nations came to Burkina Faso's National Assembly building and engaged in lively talks. A few weeks later, we opened the European regional IAPP in London with over 300 people from 40 nations in attendance. As the founder of IAPP, I sought to encourage them. "In building an eternal world of peace," I said at the London meeting, "each nation's political leaders must possess a moral character and follow ethical values and the voice of their conscience. The world will change when the world's parliamentarians unite and cooperate for the sake of peace."

Then in October, we launched IAPP chapters for Central America and South America in Costa Rica and Paraguay, respectively. Following those events, people gathered in Zambia in early November for the South and East African regional IAPP inauguration. In the northern climes, autumn was already well underway, but in parts of Africa, IAPP attendees had to endure sweltering heat. Still, we focused on our peace ideology and, in the end, resolved to find ways to cleanse our painful histories and work together.

The final IAPP events took place in Japan and the United States. In Japan, people were nervous about how many government officials would attend. These concerns were allayed when more than 200 Japanese leaders and allies, including 63 incumbent parliamentarians, attended the grand event. Regardless of political beliefs and cultural differences, they gathered without hesitation with the will to build a world of peace. In my remarks to the Japanese parliamentarians and key leaders, I conveyed my longing for peace and proposed a path by which to achieve it. They received my words with one heart.

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Our final 2016 rally took place in Washington, D.C. The choice of venue for this IAPP conference, which was the culmination of all previous efforts, was very important. In the end, members of the United States Senate offered the Kennedy Caucus Room, one of the Senate's most prestigious and historic rooms, as the event location. I was told by the Senate sponsors, "There are many rooms available for the launching ceremony. However, in view of this meeting's importance to us, we will prepare the Kennedy Caucus Room."

The Kennedy Caucus Room is where John F. Kennedy declared his presidential candidacy in 1960. The Senate voted in 2009 to name the room in honor of the three Kennedy brothers. The room has seen numerous meetings on matters of great significance in United States and world history. It was a most fitting venue for the momentous launching in North America of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace.

On November 30, 2016, while a winter rain drizzled outside, the venue was filled with more than 300 US and foreign parliamentarians from 56 nations. Many participants had already met one another at previous IAPP events, and they happily embraced their colleagues from neighboring countries. The mood in this

splendid venue was one of great joy and hope as people from nations large and small expressed their pleasure at participating in a global event for peace. The words of Hon. Gilbert Bangana, representing the president of the National Assembly of Benin, touched people's hearts: "When I was young, I learned Father and Mother Moon's principles of peace, and today I continue to practice their peace philosophy."

Many people expressed to me their gratitude for having introduced a new path toward peace. Republican US Senator, and Senate president pro tempore, Orrin Hatch, who assisted with and attended the inauguration, is a longtime friend. After I delivered my keynote address, he took the podium and kindly mentioned his appreciation for our unchanging movement for peace. Senator Hatch, who served in the United States Senate from 1977 until 2019, has always offered strong support for our work. Senator Edward Markey, representing the Democratic Party, expressed his gratitude for our contributions toward environmental preservation and promised to support us.

With the conclusion of this final launch in Washington, D.C., my course to inaugurate IAPP worldwide came to a close. For a year and more, I had traveled the globe, going to six continents to convene these events. More than 20,000 people, including 2,500 incumbent parliamentarians from 190 nations, had attended, making this initiative a great success.

Each IAPP regional inauguration marked a historic first for parliamentarians from so many nations to gather in one place. These men and women put aside differences of nationality, race and religious persuasion, and any sense of being from enemy nations. Spending several days in each other's company, they would always begin with the important question, "What can we do now for the sake of peace?"

The Cape of Good Hope and righteous hyojeong

On the southern tip of the African continent lies the Cape of Good Hope. My husband and I chose that as the starting point of our proposed International Peace Highway. As the Mother of peace, I need to give hope to the people of Africa and wipe away their tears. At the Holy Wedding of True Parents in 1960, I pledged to God, "I will accomplish Your will in my lifetime," and I have not forgotten this pledge for a moment. I have constantly spread God's word from east to west and south to north with a heart of filial piety for Heaven. In 2012, after my husband's ascension, I bade him farewell with the words "Please put all earthly work behind you and peacefully enter the heavenly gates to comfort our Heavenly Parent."

From that time, despite having to push myself beyond my limits, I took on an exhausting agenda, traveling the globe to fulfill the promise I had made to Heaven and my husband. With my husband's ascension, it was left to me to accomplish God's desire and ideal, and I have embarked on a tearful journey for that cause. For the past seven years, I have journeyed on.

Creating a heavenly tribe, a heavenly nation and a heavenly world centered on God is not simple. In my resolve to restore seven countries by 2020, I spent countless hours in prayer and devotion. My late husband lived by the mantra that "sincere devotion moves heaven" and we felt the results. Many received inspiration from Heaven, including Dr. Yoon Young-ho, then secretary-general of FFWPU International Headquarters. In July 2017, he received a revelation in which Father Moon gave him three golden keys.

At that time, Dr. Yoon was preparing for several events simultaneously, including Europe's Peace Starts with Me Rally of Hope in Vienna, Austria, and the Latin America Summit 2018 in São Paulo, Brazil. After hearing his report about the dream, I invited three "golden keys," three religious leaders, to attend the upcoming Peace Starts with Me festival in the United States. The three were Sheikh Mansour Diouf of Senegal, Prophet Samuel Radebe of South Africa, and Archbishop Johannes Ndanga of Zimbabwe. During the festival in New York, we forged strong relationships that laid the foundation for what was to come.

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In January 2018, as I have mentioned previously, I traveled to Senegal for the first Africa Summit. I held the Summit in Senegal because God had prepared a righteous man there, Sheikh Mansour Diouf, a distinguished Muslim leader. Through his efforts, numerous fellow leaders, some with millions of followers, heartily welcomed me. Impressed by our ideals and initiatives, Sheikh Diouf invested himself in preparing for the Summit. Putting his reputation on the line, Sheikh Diouf encouraged His Excellency President Macky Sall to co-host the Summit. "True Mother is coming to bring blessings to Africa," he told President Sall; "This Summit will be historic, and your support is essential."

President Macky Sall gladly welcomed me and provided the best venue in Senegal for the Summit, the Centre International de Conférences Abdou Diouf (CICAD). In addition to his generous support, President Macky Sall also generously offered his presidential vehicle and members of his security team to protect me wherever I went.

Nonetheless, one thing remained uncertain. Even as I landed in Senegal, I had not yet received

confirmation of President Sall's participation in the Summit. On the eve of the Summit, President Sall kindly offered to have a private meeting. After receiving his warm welcome, I spoke about the history of God's providence, Heaven's providence in Africa, my identity as only begotten Daughter and my wish to bless the nation and continent. After hearing me, President Sall said, "I'll attend tomorrow's Summit."

Following our meeting, I was told that President Sall was moved by the sincerity with which I wished to bless Africa and bring salvation to humankind, and by my lack of desire for honor, power or profit. I cannot verify that anecdotal report, but it is consistent with my experience of President's Sall's exemplary leadership and gallantry. The government was mobilized for the Summit, and the Summit was broadcast live throughout the nation on national television and reported by national and international media. I spoke without a prepared speech on Heaven's providence and the African Continent, and concluded my address by proclaiming Heavenly Africa, a continent of hope blessed by Heaven, and inviting everyone present to join this initiative. President Sall later expressed his desire to work together.

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The following summer, in June 2019, I visited Johannesburg, South Africa, to officiate at the 100,000 Hyojeong Family Blessing Festival.

Prophet Samuel Radebe's and my team worked together for this Blessing. More than 500 dignitaries - government officials, members of parliament and religious leaders from across Africa, including 12 current and former presidents and prime ministers - joined the event to support the True Family Movement. During the Blessing Prayer, I prayed that the continent of Africa, together with the 100,000 people in attendance, would form a Heavenly Africa, a light unto the world.

Prophet Radebe is the founder of the Revelation Church of God and Inkululeko Yesizwe, both major religious organizations with millions of followers throughout Africa. Prophet Radebe comes from a long line of Prophets well known throughout Africa. During the Blessing, he testified to me, "South Africa, and Africa as a whole, welcomes Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who has devoted her whole life to the cause of peace as True Mother, the only begotten Daughter of God." The entire nation was in a festive mood as the South African public television network, SABC, broadcast the Blessing event.

I'll share some background on this Blessing. The previous November, as I mentioned earlier, I had hosted a Summit and Blessing in Cape Town to celebrate the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth. At that time, Prophet Radebe was in Mozambique launching a new church. After Dr. Yoon Young-ho spoke with him and expressed my heartfelt desire to meet him, Prophet Radebe immediately rented a plane and flew to Cape Town, arriving just in time for the Blessing. When we met in the green room, I poured out my heart, explaining God's ideal of creation and God's providence of salvation for humankind, including the Fall, the providence of True Parents and the only begotten Daughter. I felt that Prophet Radebe was moved by my words. He called me "True Mother" and during his keynote address, even though our theological frameworks are different, testified about me as the only begotten Daughter that Heaven has prepared.

After that Blessing, Dr. Yoon laid out my vision to him: "True Mother would like to host a 100,000-person Blessing Ceremony next year." Prophet Radebe gladly replied, "Let's do it!" I felt that Prophet Radebe understood why I came to Africa: to give blessing. Eager to work together and help the flower of true love blossom in the continent, Prophet Radebe prepared meticulously for the June 2019 Blessing Ceremony at Orlando Stadium. From the hotel where I stayed to the airport welcome, Prophet Radebe invested himself and his entire foundation to welcome me and prepare for the Blessing Ceremony.

On June 7, 2019, on the eve of the Blessing, I visited the historic township of Soweto. Soweto is known throughout the world as the location of the first anti-apartheid uprisings in 1976. The home of global luminaries such as Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, its people played an important role in the civil rights movement in South Africa.

From 1948 until the 1990s, institutionalized racial segregation, known as apartheid, was enforced in South Africa. South Africa's minority white population dominated the nation's political, economic, and social institutions and actively discriminated against other races. The white government removed black people from their land, forced them to learn the Afrikaans language, and required them to have special permits to travel outside designated areas. They could not eat in the same restaurants or take the same buses as white people. Interracial marriage was illegal, and black people could not own land in white-designated areas.

In 1976, high school students in South Africa protested the forced introduction of Afrikaans as the official language through the Soweto Uprising and the many other protests that followed. Thousands of people were killed or injured during these uprisings, which became a major movement against apartheid. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and others denounced the law on learning Afrikaans, saying it forced children

to learn the "language of the oppressor." The sacrifices young students made during the protests are truly heartbreaking. Police opened fire on the students and Hector Pieteron, a 12-year-old student, was killed. The photo of Hector carried by Mbuyisa Makhubo and his sister Antoinette weeping transformed South Africa and shook the world.

The day before the Blessing Festival, I visited the Hector Pieteron memorial in Soweto to pay my respects and offer a prayer for the victims of Apartheid and of all racial discrimination. I prayed to God, asking for the liberation of the black race from the painful history of racial discrimination, for the liberation of the students killed and deprived of their hopes and dreams, and for God's blessing on South Africa and Africa. I was particularly moved to see Antoinette, along with 400 youths from throughout South Africa, gather with me at the Hector Pieteron Memorial at Prophet Radebe's invitation. The youth danced and sang beautiful songs of hope. I felt that these young people were my children.

The events of June 2019 created the momentum upon which Prophet Radebe would prepare a Blessing Ceremony for 100,000 couples in South Africa that December.

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Archbishop Johannes Ndanga of Zimbabwe is the Chairman of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ), the largest Christian council in Zimbabwe with thousands of affiliated churches and millions of members. Dr. Yun recognized Archbishop Ndanga as the third righteous man Father Moon had indicated in his dream.

Archbishop Ndanga's relationship with our movement began when he came to Kenya to offer congratulatory remarks during an interfaith Blessing Ceremony. As he spoke, the Heavens opened and he heard, "Don't just offer congratulatory remarks, receive the Blessing as well!" Archbishop Ndanga promptly received the Blessing and joyfully came to participate in the 2017 Peace Starts with Me Festival in Madison Square Garden. Archbishop Ndanga stated, "I recognized True Mother as the only begotten Daughter through Heaven's revelation. I am grateful to have received the Blessing and I am now sharing the gospel of True Parents wherever I go. I hope that True Parents' ideal of world peace can be realized."

On the eve of the Madison Square Garden festival, I invited the three "golden key" religious leaders to dine with me at our East Garden residence. There, Archbishop Ndanga said, "You are the True Mother humankind has eagerly been waiting and longing for." The following day, he testified to other religious leaders about his encounter with me, saying, "True Mother is our True Mother. I am her blessed son." Inspired by what he experienced in the US, Archbishop Ndanga returned to Zimbabwe, where he mobilized over 300 bishops from ACCZ and, together with FFWPU leaders, hosted a special Divine Principle workshop and Blessing for them. With the support of the government of Zimbabwe, each of those bishops educated and blessed 210 couples. In all, more than 60,000 couples received the Blessing.

On November 11, 2017, Archbishop Ndanga offered congratulatory remarks at the 80,000 Rally of Hope to Support the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula at the Sangam World Cup Stadium in Seoul. As he was preparing to go home, he received the news that Zimbabwe was caught up in political upheaval and a change of leadership in government. The political turmoil was severe, with riots in the street and unrest throughout the nation. Archbishop Ndanga was apprehensive about the situation. When he arrived in Harare, he saw several ministers being apprehended and taken away. Yet it was as if no one recognized him. He passed swiftly through the airport and arrived home safely. Amid the turmoil engulfing the nation, as he was a prominent Christian leader, his life was certainly at risk. He firmly believes that I protected him from coming to harm, testifying, "It was True Mother's miracle."

In 2018, I appointed Archbishop Ndanga to the position of Cheon Il Guk Special Envoy for Zimbabwe. He responded with determination, saying, "I will be a dutiful son who will testify throughout Zimbabwe and Africa to the True Mother as the only begotten Daughter of God." All people are God's children. God does not discriminate based on skin color. True Parents have blessed Africa as Heavenly Africa and prayed for its liberation from past afflictions. A new history is being written, one where African families are being reborn as true families through the Blessing. This is initiating the change that will raise Africa to become the shining continent of hope for all humankind.

São Tomé and Príncipe, the model for national restoration

Following the inaugural Africa Summit held in January 2018, various nations throughout the African continent expressed a desire to host Summits and Blessings. After nearly four decades of mission work and on the foundation of the previous year's activities and World Summit 2019, the government of São Tomé and Príncipe expressed a strong desire to host initiatives throughout the country, including a Summit, a Blessing Festival and a Youth and Students for Peace Festival.

I sent my representative to São Tomé in the Spring of 2019 and, after he met the President, His Excellency Evaristo Carvalho, the Prime Minister, His Excellency Jorge Bom Jesus, and the President of

the National Assembly, His Excellency Delfim Neves, a memorandum of understanding between UPF and the government of São Tomé was signed. Hearing about São Tomé's willingness to work together on several key initiatives, I was determined to bless it and lay the foundation for a Heavenly nation there, and I announced that I would hold the 2019 Africa Summit and the Hyojeong Family Blessing Festival in São Tomé and Príncipe.

This is a beautiful equatorial island nation in the Gulf of Guinea off the coast of Central Africa. It gained its independence from Portugal in 1975. After we had traveled for more than 40 hours, including two layovers, the government of São Tomé offered an extraordinary welcome. Cabinet ministers welcomed me warmly at the airport, and the next day His Excellency President Evaristo Carvalho welcomed me at the Presidential Palace for a private meeting. Following our cordial meeting, the presidential honor guard escorted me to the National Assembly building to open the Summit.

More than 800 leaders from São Tomé and throughout Africa were in attendance. The National Assembly had generously offered the use of its premises for the Summit and Blessing, and by 9:00 a.m. the main hall and surrounding overflow rooms were full. In addition to His Excellencies President Carvalho, Prime Minister Jorge Bom Jesus and President of the National Assembly Delfim Neves, there were hundreds of parliamentarians, dozens of government ministers, hundreds of religious leaders and leaders of civil society, as well as several former heads of state from throughout Africa in attendance.

The Summit, Blessing and YSP festivals were all broadcast live on national television and the feedback from the viewers was overwhelmingly positive.

The Summit began, and after inspiring addresses by current and former heads of state, His Excellency Goodluck Jonathan, former president of Nigeria and the Africa chair of the International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP), introduced me. During my keynote address, I proposed that São Tomé and Príncipe work together with me in realizing the model of a heavenly nation. I blessed São Tomé and Príncipe as "Heavenly São Tomé," a nation blessed by God. Hearing this, the audience cheered.

Following my address, President Carvalho expressed his gratitude, sharing his profound appreciation for the various initiatives undertaken in the nation as well as the vision I had laid out during my address. President Carvalho also expressed a strong desire to forge an even stronger relationship and continue our work over the long term. He was particularly happy to hear the term "Heavenly São Tomé" and even referred to me as "Mother Moon."

That evening, President Carvalho invited me and other heads of state to a state dinner in a beautiful seaside restaurant reserved for state functions. The gentlemanly President Carvalho guided me as we made our way along the sumptuous buffet, recommending delicious local dishes. I was moved by the sincere desire of the São Tomé government to develop their nation in a gracious and principled manner.

The following day, all government officers, including the President, the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly, as well as the former heads of state, gathered for the Blessing Festival. It was a beautiful sight to behold. Six hundred couples, most of them governmental leaders, religious leaders, and leaders of civil society from throughout São Tomé and neighboring Príncipe, gathered for the Blessing.

More than 10,000 couples had participated in a preliminary Blessing Ceremony and representatives were selected to attend this Blessing. I was moved by accounts of couples on the verge of divorce healing their differences and pledging to become ideal families through the Blessing. It was a magnificent family festival, and the eagerness of the families could be seen when at 8:00 a.m. the venue was full even though the Blessing was scheduled for 5:00 p.m. Several couples had come before dawn. The festive mood in the National Assembly was indeed unique. As the time for the Blessing drew closer, the anticipation and eagerness of the couples could be felt.

Fifteen current and former heads of state from throughout Africa were seated on the podium and I sprinkled holy water on 60 couples representing the realms of government, religion and civil society. It was a beautiful, solemn occasion. The enthusiastic participation of all three branches of the São Tomé government as well as the people meant this was truly a national Blessing Ceremony. During my Blessing prayer, I stated that São Tomé and Príncipe had earned the qualification of the first nation to be a model for national restoration.

One particularly moving part of the Blessing program was the purity pledge by representatives of São Tomé's youth.

As we prepared for these events, a local Catholic priest published a letter profoundly critical of the Unification Church, the Blessing Ceremony and the Universal Peace Federation. Nonetheless, the relationships we forged with the São Tomé government and people proved strong enough to bridge any theological differences. The government was firm in its commitment and the people were overjoyed to participate in the many programs that were held.

The day after the Blessing, IAYSP held what some said was the largest youth festival ever held in the nation.

As I was about to leave the country, the president of São Tomé and Príncipe bade me a sincere farewell with the kindest words: "São Tomé is your home and your country, so please come whenever you can."

Energy and optimism in Europe

I'm particularly fond of the small European nation of Albania. During the Cold War era, Albania was one of the most impoverished nations in the world, but in the last 20 years the Albanian people have made great strides in developing their country. Their energy and optimism reminds me of my own Korean people.

In 2005, President Alfred Moisiu gave my husband and me a state welcome as we were traveling the world to launch the Universal Peace Federation. He was the first sitting head of state to do so. I remember saying to President Moisiu, "If you give us 2,000 young people to educate, we can help you change this nation."

This challenge was fulfilled in October 2019 during the SouthEast Europe Peace Summit when 3,000 energetic school and college students gathered for the Youth and Students for Peace Rally in Tirana, followed by the launch of the Balkans Peace Road.

Earlier that same day, former President Moisiu, now a sprightly 90-year-old, and Senior Minister Elisa Spiropali welcomed me on behalf of the government to speak to the Albanian people at the Summit. We were joined on stage by President Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo and President Stevo Pendarovski of North Macedonia, and the event was broadcast live on national television.

I encouraged the Albanian people: "You do not need to be disappointed because you could not join the European Union. As you are the first, you need to embrace the people of Europe who are the last.... God will be with you wherever you go. From this point, if Albania overcomes all the pain of the past it is holding onto and is reborn as the heavenly nation of Albania attending God, it will not be a problem for Europe to become one."

The following day, I conducted a Blessing Ceremony for 1,200 couples, representing 12,000 couples throughout Albania who had been blessed during 2018 and 2019. Albania is a moderate Muslim nation, and it is fortunate to house different religious traditions in harmony. Father Edmond Brahimaj, head of the World Bektashi Order, as well as imams and priests offered prayers of blessing in one accord.

In her congratulatory remarks, Monika Kryemadhi, the wife of Albanian President Ilir Meta, said it was the most beautiful event that had ever been held in the Palace of Congresses. On that day I declared that the nation had indeed become Heavenly Albania. I look forward to Albania becoming a great nation by living for the sake of other nations.