

Peace Starts With Me's Essential Financial Commitment from Local Churches

Mika Deshotel
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In late August, many of the local pastors in the tri-state area were asked to come to HSA-UWC Headquarters in New York for a special meeting in preparation for the November 12 Peace Starts With Me rally. The purpose of the meeting was to hear updates on the preparations for the rally, as well as understanding Northeast Subregional Director, Rev. Demian Dunkley's heart of building true ownership towards this effort more deeply. Demian then gave a proposal which included an essential financial commitment on the part of the local churches as a way of showing their solidarity and commitment towards the success of this rally.

The following is a testimony from Mika Deshotel, Co-pastor of the Family Church of Connecticut.

"Recognizing that even though our local churches have not typically been asked to give a monetary donation for big events in the past, the Family Church of Connecticut was excited by this opportunity to contribute to such a big event.

Until that point, I had been feeling the need to show our unity as one Northeast subregion, as our True Mother has expected us to be. I remember at first thinking, "Sure, we could give maybe \$10,000 towards this," but I was a little surprised when the suggested amount was presented at \$20,000. After understanding the reasoning of our subregion team, and looking at our financial situation over the last few years, it became more and more evident to me how doable it actually was for us and that on my end, it simply needed to be something I could inspire our Local

Council with.

Fortunately for us, I believe much of the testifying came directly from Rev. Dunkley's own words as he shared at a joint service at UTS on September 9. There, we listened to him talk about the rally and ultimately, that this offering would be something all of us could be proud of as a way to encourage our True Mother and give her energy on her global tour. The evening before, I wrote an email to our Local Council explaining what we were asked to do.

By Sunday evening, an emergency Zoom meeting was called by the council to take a vote and ask questions. While initially we had some reservations about giving this amount, knowing we may be losing possible funds for a building opportunity or other emergency in the future, it was also moving to see others seriously testifying to the importance of giving not only the suggested amount, but even more if possible, recognizing how impactful an event like this could potentially have towards our efforts in national restoration by 2020. By the end of the call, our Local Council voted unanimously to support giving those funds toward the rally.

When we shared with our local community the decision to give the \$20,000, I am sure many of our members did not realize we were in a financial state where we could give that money. I believe however, our financial stability has been in large part due to the faithful tithing practices Connecticut has committed to for decades in supporting our district and Headquarters, along with the guidance of our financial committees in the past. I am grateful that our community has demonstrated financial stewardship and thus had a financially healthy foundation to draw these funds for when the time called for it.

I wish to acknowledge all of the other communities, as well as individuals and families that could give to support this historic event on November 12. Many others had to work harder or sacrifice more than we did to give whatever financial contribution they could for the Nassau event. I believe, however, that the heart at which we give, no matter our financial prosperity, matters most. Our True Parents have lived by the life motto of giving totally of oneself, forgetting what one has given, and then giving again. They have also said to give the best of what we have. Truly, when we consider the most precious blessings God and True Parents have given us, we find deeper understanding behind why our True Mother asks us to share our blessing by Blessing others: lineage is truly the most precious gift we have been given. At the same time, this idea of giving the best includes all facets of our lives, such as our financial earnings. I believe, as we make it a habit to consistently give the best of what we have, which can translate financially into a good practice of regular tithing, doorways can be opened for us to not only expect more blessings our way, but also to come to a place of greater appreciation and gratitude for those blessings we can give for the sake of others."