

Forum at IPEC for leaders who attended Korean Peace Starts With Me seminar

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On Friday, September 22, 2017, religious leaders who had gone to Korea in early September to attend the [Peace Starts With Me interreligious conference](#) gathered for a Pastors' Forum in Las Vegas at the International Peace Education Center (IPEC).

The forum allowed the pastors to give their testimonies of attending the International Religious Leaders Conference in Korea. As True Mother said at the final banquet in Korea, "Your time on earth is important. A world that attends Heavenly Parent and True Parents will be remembered with pride throughout history." Thus, the form was also intended to connect the religious representatives to the Cheon Il Guk era and to True Mother's hope for Christianity.

The first session of the Pastors' Forum began with pastors' testimonies, after which Archbishop George Augustus Stallings Jr., the national co-chair of ACLC, gave his own testimony. In the second session, Archbishop Stallings told the pastors how they can become the true parents to their congregation.

Below are two reflections from the recent Pastors' Forum.

Leslie Rigney:

I noticed a real shift in attitude and commitment in some of the pastors who attended.

Several pastors were asked to give their testimonies of their experience in Korea:

Rev. Raymond Giddens, the senior pastor of Unity Baptist Church in Las Vegas, was the first to speak. I noticed a real change in his attitude. He testified to the quality of the organizational structure and the "Heavenly Headquarters." He called this a testimony to the presence of God. Not only through his words but also through his humility and conviction, I could feel that Rev. Giddens was expressing a new spirit of love for True Parents.

Dr. Phyllis Taylor testified that she had felt an overwhelming experience of love in Korea. She was very sincere.

First Lady Faye McDonnell, from Wealthy Life Ministries in North Las Vegas, called her experience in Korea life-changing. She said there is a whole new world from what we had known before.

She spoke of Mother Moon as a lady of reverence and said she could feel God's anointing of Mother Moon's life. She was very moved by True Parents' vision of world peace, and spoke of how precious it was to be amid so many people who had come together to praise Almighty God in many tongues. She said she saw True Mother as someone with power and purpose. I felt also an attitude of humility, deep appreciation and openness for however God wants to use her. Her husband was right with her. They have been ministering to the poor. I could feel that a great change is happening in their lives!

Archbishop Stallings said that God chose us and is calling us out of the boxes that we are used to being in. God is shaking us to the core, he said, and is asking us to enlarge our territory and not be afraid to tread into deep waters. He spoke of Jesus being an anchor and said he wants to be like Jesus. He spoke of the importance of spiritual discernment in evaluating our experience. We are coming into an experience far bigger than anything we are used to, he said. He testified to True Parents as two people totally consumed and inebriated by God's Love, offering all their energy and resources to build heaven on earth.

There was a new feeling of deep sincerity and conviction as Archbishop Stallings spoke. He warned against getting stuck in doctrinal hang-ups to the point of losing the big picture. He testified about True Parents coming to the United States in the 1970s to strengthen Christianity. "If Christianity can become what it was meant to be," he said, "it will be the greatest change agent the world has ever seen." He told those in attendance that everything will pass away except our character. "We need to love creation, love others, and live for the sake of others," he said. "The true test is how we loved one another, so let us tear down the walls!"

The vibrant conversation at dinner showed how electrifying the program had been.



James Oberg:

The pastors' reflections were very moving and inspirational. Their outlook on the Unification movement had changed markedly in a positive way.

The pastors all had revelations leading them to see beyond their own denomination and religious beliefs and to work on the commonalities among the world's religions.

Archbishop George Augustus Stallings recalled his personal experiences from his early life and the changes he experienced after meeting True Parents. Most moving was his transition from celibate life to married life, becoming a family man with a beautiful wife, picked by True Father, and two beautiful sons.

His continuing life of faith and burning resolve to fulfill True Parents' desires deeply inspired the pastors.