

Peace Road United Nations, New York

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By FFWPU USA: The idea of the International Peace Highway, first raised at a 1981 interdisciplinary conference of Korean, Japanese and American scientists in Seoul and later expanded to include a proposed tunnel crossing of the Bering Strait, exemplifies True Father's conviction that humanity is really one family under God. He believed that if people could meet each other in daily life, through culture, trade, and travel, they would come to break down the historic fears and misunderstandings that often divide us from our closest neighbors.

On Tuesday, August 4, 2015, the Peace Road entered the global spotlight at a United Nations gathering, where a group of over 60 people discussed the vision and impact of a road that would connect six continents. Part of the Peace Road journey, this event coincided with the 70th anniversary of both the United Nations and the separation of North and South Korea.

The meeting was sponsored by the Mission of Grenada to the United Nations and organized and co-sponsored by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) and Universal Peace Federation (UPF), and it concluded with a cycling trek at Central Park to promote the idea of the Peace Road.

Speakers, representatives of various organizations and guests gathered early at the UN Headquarters building in New York City, greeting new faces and browsing the Peace Road exhibit—a display of posters with photos of Peace Road events around the world.

At 10:00 a.m. the briefing began, the highlight of which was a report on the 2015 Peace Road by Dr. Byoung Ho Son, President of UPF Korea and of the Peace Road organizing committee in Korea. Dr. Taj Hamad, Secretary General of the Universal Peace Federation, was the moderator of the gathering. "Peace Road 2015 is a journey to raise hope that we can build a peaceful world," he said as he opened the meeting.

Dr. Thomas Walsh, President of UPF, then gave some welcoming remarks, sharing the history of True Father's idea to build an international highway, and updating everyone on the current status of plans to build a tunnel at the Bering Strait, to which UPF has been encouraging the Russian government to give more attention in the near future.

Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Chairman of UPF USA, gave opening remarks, saying that "we call these days the Super Speed Era, but through this Peace Road we want to take time, go from town to town, village to village, city to city, and we want to meet people." He shared that the origin of world peace begins with the unity between mind and body, and without this we cannot build a peaceful community, nation, or world.

"We are in the United Nations, where people represent their nation looking for world peace," said Dr. Kim. "On the Peace Road, we bike from Los Angeles to San Francisco, to Portland to Seattle, Vancouver, Anchorage and Kodiak. We share with mayors, government workers, farmers, city workers, and we ask them, 'How can we bring peace starting from you?' This is our message to the world."

Dr. Byoung Ho Son then began his message and report. He described the origin of the Peace Road project, which started with a Peace Bike project in 2013 where Japanese and Korean participants rode together for 3800 kilometers. In 2014, 14 countries in North America, South America, Europe and Asia participated for 6000 kilometers. This year, the global Peace Road journey involved 120 nations around the world.

“The Peace Road can be called a global peace project where global citizens can participate beyond borders of religion and race,” said Dr. Son. He shared about True Parents’ suggestion for a project called the World Peace King Bridge Tunnel from Cape of Good Hope in South Africa to Santiago, Chile with the aim to realize the ideal of one family under God. “They also concretely proposed and strived to realize a Japan-Korea tunnel project and the Bering Strait project,” he said. “It has been 70 years since Korea has been divided into North and South. The reunification of Korea is the basis of global peace. The Peace Road project will create an urge for realizing the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Our hope is that the United Nations will be interested and cooperate with us. We ask for your support and cooperation regarding the Peace Road world tour.”



Dr. Hamad responded by saying that UPF will present a report to Ambassadors and officials of the United Nations. Antoine Denis, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Grenada to the United Nations and host and co-sponsor of this event, then took the floor to further address next steps in the Peace Road cause.

“This Peace Road program and exhibition convened here today at the United Nations is about world peace,” he began. “It represents a growing intolerance of violence and conflict in our world. Going on a long journey begins with a first step, and if we do it together we can go very far.”

“Peace Road marchers, riders, walkers are more than just travelers,” he continued. “They must be seen as change agents and messengers.”

Mr. Denis announced that the United Nations is now embarking on a momentous collective journey, with member states determined to see certain goals fully met in their strategic plans for 2030. As homework to the group, he said, “Today I call upon Ambassadors for Peace and Peace Road riders to adopt and embrace the Sustainable Development Goal #16. I encourage you to become familiar with the 17 goals and 169 targets designed to stimulate action.”

The United Nations gathering highlighted the importance of creating peace-building partnerships, and joining forces to realize the dream of a unified and peaceful world.

Adjourning from the United Nations Headquarters, participants signed the Peace Road Declaration and then regrouped at the Columbus Circle entrance to Central Park at 1:00pm, to “walk the talk,” as Dr. Hamad announced at the close of the UN meeting.

There, Miilhan Stephens, Vice President of FFWPU USA, gave a short overview of the purpose of the Peace Road.

The group took a photo and invited other bikers at the park to join in the ride, giving them extra T-shirts and hats to wear and flags to hold. Many other local bikers learned about the Peace Road while biking alongside the Peace Road riders on the scenic bike route throughout the park, asking them questions and cheering them on.

After the last Peace Road event in the United States this Thursday in Washington, D.C., the journey will continue on to Japan, and finally Korea—“the most divided nation in the world,” said Dr. Ki Hoon Kim. “The finish line is the 38th parallel which divides North and South Korea. We want to bring peace from here to Korea.”

