

## **Report about the African national assembly in Senegal, Africa in January 2018**

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On January 19, 2018, at the House of Slaves on Gorée Island, Senegal, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the co-founder of PWPA and the Universal Peace Federation and many other projects, performed a solemn ceremony of liberation and resolution for all those who have suffered because of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade over the course of five centuries.

According to UNESCO, "The Island of Gorée is an exceptional testimony to one of the greatest tragedies in the history of human societies: the slave trade. The various elements of this "memory island" – fortresses, buildings, streets, squares, etc. – recount, each in its own way, the history of Gorée which, from the 15th to the 19th century, was the largest slave-trading center of the African coast." The ceremony which True Mother conducted there has wide-reaching implications, for the past, present and future. I would like to humbly offer some reflections on the providential significance of that event, as we seek together to comprehend and realize it more fully.



### **1. Liberation and Theology**

My birth country, the United States, was one of the many places to which African slaves were shipped from Goree Island and other slave-trading ports. Almost everyone in the U.S. now recognizes the grave sin of slavery. When U.S. President George W. Bush visited Goree Island in 2003, he publicly confessed America's sin of slavery. Speaking of Christians in particular, he said, "Christian men and women became blind to the clearest commands of their faith and added hypocrisy to injustice...A republic founded on equality for all became a prison for millions."

Concerted efforts to end the slave trade began in the early 1800s, but the dismantling of the slave system in the U.S. was not accomplished until the end of the U.S. Civil War. Moreover, the legacy of racial discrimination and injustice has continued to the present, leading some African-American theologians to pursue a theological agenda known as black liberation theology. Justin Ukpong notes that liberation theology is one of the major trends in African theology as well, reflecting the concern of African theologians for the betterment of economic and social conditions in Africa.



Liberation theology calls for liberation from disadvantaged social, economic and political conditions, and may advocate radical or violent action. It claims to address the actual situation of historical and present injustice, and to seek social change. However, because liberation theology only focuses on the horizontal, social level alone, it cannot fully recognize or resolve the issue. Liberation theology highlights historical injustice, but in the process stirs resentment on the part of all concerned. Resentment itself is destructive, not creative. To release resentment and truly bring healing, there has to be another kind of internal release from the conditions blocking resolution and advancement.



## **2. Resolving Resentment**

The Korean title of the Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's special ceremony includes not only the standard Korean word for liberation but also a special term that means resolution of resentment. In other words, the ceremony was specifically designed to recognize and release the accumulated historical and spiritual resentment associated with the African slave trade.

Resentment indicates ill will, that is unfriendly or hostile feelings towards someone else. In its French form, the concept of resentment has been widely explored in modern Western philosophy and psychology. Yet there is considerable debate as to the validity of resentment-based value perspectives, and the extent to which value systems based on resentment are maladaptive and destructive. On the contrary, the ceremony conducted by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon intends release and liberation from the cycle of resentment.

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon went to Gorée Island in person to officiate over the ceremony of liberation from resentment for all those involved in the slave trade. The aim of the ceremony was not simply to influence the external social-political-economic conditions of Africa today, but was primarily focused on impacting the internal, psychological-cultural-spiritual situation which affects the past, present and future. This special ceremony revealed her determination to resolve the historical resentment and grief of the African slave trade in order to usher in a new Heavenly Africa.

The uplifting of Africa to its proper place, as Heavenly Africa, will bring change, first among Africans and secondly among other peoples in relationship with Africans. It is time to dissolve the remnants of resentment which have fettered our relationships. The African religious leaders who are supporting Dr. HakJa Han Moon, PWPA, UPF and the related organization have a key role to play in the full realization of the promises contained within this ceremony. The responsibility of Europeans and Euro-Americans is to avoid reverse resentment, and instead to welcome and make way for the rise of new, Heavenly Africa.

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Many world leaders have come to Gorée Island to pay their respects, or even to pray. However, no one could resolve the historical grief symbolized by that place, until the direct representative of Heavenly Parent came to perform the liberation and resolution ceremony. Because only she understood that Heavenly Parent is the most grieved by the events that happened at Gorée Island.

This ceremony represents a window for our world-wide family to understand True Mother more deeply, through appreciation of her spiritual works. Through pondering this event, we can glimpse the True Mother of all humankind. On behalf of Heavenly Parent, True Mother has opened the way. In the biblical phrase (Isa. 53:4), "Surely she has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

Therefore, we have to humble down anew and receive True Parents, and realize once again that they have come to resolve the things which others have been unable to resolve. The legacy of slavery has been a huge barrier between "black and white." In the rapid unfolding of providential history, this ceremonial event represents a kaironic moment of resolution. Now it is time to open wide the community of faith, to welcome all brothers and sisters with true parental heart-and-mind.

In her prayer at the ceremony, True Mother asked where Jesus' words about "loving your neighbor as yourself" went, when they were cast aside for profit in the slave trade. So, also, True Parents' words about how to care for one another in our world-wide family, and how to treat all people as fellow brothers and sisters--these words also must be put into constant practice.

At the close of her prayer, True Mother said, "Let us cooperate enthusiastically to achieve a world of no more conflict, suffering, or war--one world of complete harmony and unification centered on Heavenly Parent." With these words, True Mother is personally leading us all in welcoming, encouraging and supporting the emergence of Heavenly Africa, so that we can participate together in the great work of re-creating the world family through the love of Heavenly Parent. Then we can freely meet and treat one another joyfully, as true brothers and sisters.

AJU!