

Going to South America

Paul Greene

I HAD considered going to UTS since the late 1980's when Father said that he wanted more western members to attend the seminary. In 1990 I found myself in a situation where I had no public mission for the first time in my church life.

The feeling of "homelessness" felt somewhat strange, considering that for the 12 years previous to that I had always been doing something that could be considered a "front line" mission. Since I had been thinking about attending UTS, it seemed like it might be the right time to "make the plunge." I moved to the UTS area in 1990 still needing to finish attaining a bachelor's degree.

Basically I was starting from scratch, having about 10 credits that I could claim from a few previous college classes. I enrolled in the Regent's College out of Albany, NY and began studying to take GRE and CLEP tests. It took longer than I originally planned to finish getting the degree from Regent's College, but for reasons that were not related to academic matters.

The GRE tests and CLEP tests I found to be relatively easy to pass with even a moderate amount of studying. To tell the truth, what made me apprehensive was the burden of responsibility that was expected of seminarians after they graduate. I do not like to be in the public spotlight that much, but being a seminary graduate not only puts you in the spotlight, it puts you in the position of Father taking a personal interest in what you're doing. I never felt I could attend the seminary purely for academic reasons. If I was not willing to go to the front line after graduating, I didn't feel like I should enter UTS.

Confronting the challenge

I did not start UTS until the fall of 1992 and I have to confess that my heart was in a turmoil for those two years. It took me two years to get over the feelings of "can I really live up to Father's

expectation for UTS graduates" as well as the feelings of wanting to pursue the "normal" life of a career of some sort, a house in a nice middle class suburban neighborhood with a two car garage; in other words the "typical American materialistic dream." When I had made up my mind to "damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead," it felt like a big weight off my back. With the "American Dream" shattered, but my spirit intact, it gave

also gave a talk to students one night that left me with a feeling like I had been run over by a steam roller.

After these speeches by Father and Un Jin Nim, I started feeling like "what's a squid like me doing here?" The caliber of students had become quite high; Jin Hun Nim had graduated the previous year, three other members of the True Family had been taking classes, Peter Kim was a student, as well as several older Korean and Japanese members, and there were several western members with a lot of leadership experience.

I looked around at some of my fellow classmates and had a definite inferiority complex set in. Stubbornness and fear of

me a sense of relief to have made the choice I did. I went through a few more times of inner turmoil while I was attending UTS. In the spring of 1994 Father came twice to speak to students and spoke quite harshly. Un Jin Nim

the title of "UTS Dropout" kept me going long enough to graduate. I think (and when I say this I think I speak for the majority of the graduates) the most important time for any UTS graduate is the moment when you meet Father face

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Paul Greene poses for a photo with his wife Yasuko after his graduation at the Unification Theological Seminary.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PAUL GREENE

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This is really an awesome moment in one's spiritual life. Not having had the experience of sitting in front of Father in such a way in the past, I was probably a little more giddy (may be "goofy" is a better word ?) than those who had had such an experience before.

Usually Father pops in once, maybe a few times, during the graduates' workshop to get a look at everyone face to face. It was incredible that Father called the Class of '95 to East Garden on not one, but three separate occasions to speak to us and give his direction personally and in great detail.

Going to South America

With the providence taking a turn to South America this year, I suppose many people weren't too surprised we were told the direction would be to go to South America. I had a feeling of being "predestined" to go there, maybe more so than most people. In 1990 or 1991 when we were all assigned to do 40 day pioneering in a foreign country, I told my wife before the countries were picked "I am going to get a South American country;" it did not surprise me at all when I was picked for Chile.

Last Christmas when I was working in the malls, I started to get this strong urge to start studying Spanish, even before Father began to speak about South America. In May of this year, after attending a Sunday service at Belvedere and hearing a report by Rev. Zin Moon Kim about South America, my spiritual antenna started buzzing like it had just been zapped with 1000 volts of electricity. I went home and told my wife "Yasuko, we're going to go to South America after graduation.

can you expect from a squid?) was given responsibility beyond his wildest imagination. "Be able to give fluent Spanish Divine Principle lectures within a year." "Become a capable journalist right away or find someone who could do a good job and manage them well. Do a good job and I will make you the head of a newspaper." "While you are at it, become a recruiter and representative for the University of Bridgeport." "Witness to

to be part of the "third world" is an inherent challenge. My country, Panama, is relatively well off compared to many Latin American countries. In this sense I should feel lucky I guess; I had been prepared in my mind to go to a lot poorer country than Panama.

Some hobbies I developed while in UTS have turned out to be providentially very useful for our responsibilities in Latin America. I became good with computers

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the presidents of your country, grab them by the waists and shake them up and down. They should never forget you." And on and on.

One point Father emphasized in speaking to us is that we should "act first, and then think and make plans." If someone used to the relatively easygoing life of America "thinks" too much about uprooting their lives and moving to another country, it will be very easy to "think" themselves out of going. Since I had already made up my mind to go to Panama (my assigned country) no matter what, I felt free to begin "thinking" about working out the external details without worrying that I might "think" my way out of going at all.

Learning the language

Realistically, there are a lot of barriers to overcome. My Spanish language skills

and the Internet during the last couple of years, and this will be extremely handy for our international communications.

All those people who thought I was just some computer nut staying up late at night wasting his time "surfing the 'Net" have started coming and asking how to get started with e-mail. (It feels good to be able to finally say "Hah, I told you so"! The money thing is always hanging over your head. With the sizable debt I built up while in UTS, I have to deal with not only a previous debt, but also find a way to avoid being a financial burden to the church in Panama. I am trying to mull over different business ideas that could support my family and I as well as pay off old debt. In trying to keep things in perspective, I have been trying to not dwell on the difficulties, internal or external, of moving to Panama.

Whatever hardships come, as they most certainly will, they should be seen as natural obstacles along the way of our course of life. There is no need to avoid them or try to hide from them; actually they should be seen as opportunities for advancement and development.

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Even if no other person is sent there, I think Father will somehow pick me individually to go." When the "official" word came down, neither my wife nor I were surprised; we had already made up our minds to go down there for 5, 10, 20 years, whatever it takes.

Naturally, this here "squid" who did not think he had be assigned to "too" much responsibility (after all, how much

are very minimal, speaking just enough Spanish to sell roses and peanut brittle, make fun of someone's beer belly, and that is about it. I bought some Spanish language cassette tapes on the way back from East Garden and plunged right into it. Se habla español?

For someone who has spent their whole life in a "comfortable" country like America, going to a country considered

Paul Greene and his wife, Yasuko, participated in the 2075 Couples' Blessing. They have two daughters, Carolyn and Jeroko.