

What True Father taught us while planning an international lawyers' association

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Father and Mother receive the flag, presented by Mark Paine, which flew over the US Capitol building while Mother spoke there, July 28, 1993

Peter Ross attended a special conference for church lawyers that Father hosted in Alaska in the mid-1990s; this is his testimony of True Father's way of training.

If one wonders about the extent of God's grace in the Completed Testament Age, one needs look no further than True Parents' invitation to all lawyers within the Unification community to join them in Alaska!

While the purpose of the conference was for us to receive Father's commission to inaugurate an international lawyers' association, it was more than one-dimensional. Father was indeed very serious to create an organization that could serve as an instrument in the transformation of society. Looking beyond and through his own personal experience of the corruption in the justice systems in Korea, Japan, America and elsewhere, Father can feel great empathy and compassion for all those who have been victimized by the abuses of power and privilege. Yet, with a heart of forgiveness, and free of any grudge or resentment, he is determined to create a new society out of the ruins of the decaying fallen culture. A symptom of this dissolution is the degradation rampant in our most esteemed institutions. It is all the more tragic because those institutions were originally created to advance the highest ideals and values. The damage to the justice systems of the world, as a result of selfishness and greed, violates that which is most sacred. The very notion of justice in its truest sense is really one and the same as the concept of restoration. The achievement of true justice is but an application of the principles of restoration. Who then, other than Father, has the moral substance to initiate an association dedicated to exposing the roots and tentacles of societal corruption? Who else can promulgate the highest ethical and principled standards for human conduct in both the private and public arenas? In this sense, Father is the jurist of all jurists.

Father initially spoke to us after Pledge on Sunday, August 28, and outlined a very broad and deep vision for what an international organization of legal professionals should do and who should be a part of it. However, he was more concerned that we become people, lawyers, of a character and nature to embody and apply heaven's standards of goodness and righteousness. A significance of the conference was for us to be cleansed again of the detrimental influences of the world, particularly of those that often arise in professional practice. Our three meetings with Father, the several presentations of "bitter medicine" given

by Reverend Zin Moon Kim, and the various challenges that we encountered in the course of our time on the ocean were perfectly measured (by our distinguished host, of course) to give us the trigger for a fresh start.

At the same time, Father sought to instill in us a greater concern for the well-being of society and the world and a diminution of any concerns for temporal material perks. He advised us that the good lawyer seeks to serve the law of the mind, while the bad lawyer is enslaved to the law of the flesh. Has the lawyer become a servant or a master to the law? If the latter, he can teach and lead others in the right direction. Father was most concerned for our eternal lives and cautioned against operating in an enslaved and subdued conformity with a fallen society and world.

The spirit world will show us clearly how we have lived. This, therefore, was no academic conference nor in any way a typical lawyers' conference. It was alternatively, a conferring of great blessing upon us, 29 in all, representatives of almost fifty Unificationist lawyers throughout the world. As we know, with great blessing comes great responsibilities!



Fishing instruction

With props in hand, Father then proceeded to personally instruct us in the fine art of salmon fishing and the less deft craft of halibut fishing. The salmon rod in Father's hands seemed similar to a rapier in comparison to the clunky halibut pole that has all the appearances of a Scottish claymore. Father's passion and love for the salmon was apparent in his salute to this noble fish as the true love role model. He was especially pleased to point out to us that the word "salmon" was really an abbreviation for "salvation Moon." Inspired, instructed and inspected, we were soon headed for Marka Bay to join Father and Mother for our first taste of Alaskan salmon fishing.

En route, I looked wide-eyed at the vast ocean waters and contemplated the great depths below, abundant in the rich resources that Father envisions as feeding the world. It is astonishing. The great stretches of wilderness, seemingly uninhabited and virgin, were a delight to behold -after the steel and concrete of Manhattan. Aware, in this vast and inaccessible place -- quiet but for the sounds of water, wind and occasional bird calls that Father and Mother relentlessly continued to advance the recreation of the world, the biblical parable of the mustard seed struck a chord in my mind.

America's true prayer ground

Alaska! Father once played with the sound of "Alaska" and attributed its meaning as that place we eventually reach with anticipation and hope after a long and difficult journey. "At-last-ka!!!" Father has also described Alaska as America's true prayer ground. For all of us arriving there from different countries and different mission and work responsibilities, Alaska generously extended itself to us on both

counts. It was a temporary spiritual sanctuary, offering a reprieve from the challenges and battles that we each face in our own private and public lives. It afforded us a profound and intimate daily communion with God and with Father and Mother. It also gave us the chance to meet each other--outside the fortresses of pinstripe suits and tight neckties -- exposed before the natural world in our makeshift fishing attire! The bonds of camaraderie and friendship forged as a result of our shared experience with Parents reminded me of the enduring relationships cultivated at UTS (our church seminary) in Barrytown. This heavenly fraternal networking is always a concern of True Parents, that we might be more able to go beyond our old worldly differences and create a real and authentic foundation for dynamic cooperation.

Frustration

It was especially frustrating for me personally not to be able to land a silver salmon in a legitimate manner from a river that was teeming with peak-hour traffic. To keep a salmon that was caught in the river as a result of an accidental snagging is prohibited by law. Boy, was I tempted when I landed a real beauty only to realize that he was hooked in the gut. However, with Father and Mother several yards away and surrounded by a bevy of righteous lawyers, the thought was drowned as I returned the salmon to the water. It then seemed that the salmon picked up on my anguish, which only increased over the course of our two days at the river, and so they conspired to taunt me. Jumping boldly out of the water right in front of me, some real silver bullet would swish its tail defiantly in mid-air only to dive and then speed away downstream. I had the classic experience of every fisherman (except probably for two that I know): the one that got away. I hooked him upstream to my left at ten o'clock; he jumped out of the water right in front of me at twelve o'clock; then hit the water and took off like a bat out of hell breaking my line and taking my tackle.



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Understanding

In a choice moment after an early speech Tuesday morning, Father demonstrated his wonderful humor. While chiding those of us who failed to catch a fish big enough to keep, he quipped: "Well it wasn't as if there weren't enough fish in the water." It seemed to me then (there must have been a reason other than my own incompetence and impatience!) that God had something He wanted me to experience, other than the succulent taste of my own trophy silver salmon.

I am reminded that in my homeland of Ireland the salmon is a symbol of wisdom, and in a more modest moment of honest reflection I know I have much yet to learn, particularly from the Master Fisherman.

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