

Amazon Journey: It's a Rainforest Out There – Part 4

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When we got back to the dock, the local Unification Church members were waiting, welcoming, expectant. More of them stood at the entrance to the hotel with their children, all dressed in their Sunday best. They had never seen True Parents before in person. It was late, but Father's smile said, "Come on up!," and they trailed after him. That evening, as tired as Father surely was, he spoke to the Macapá members, drawing upon a source of energy deep within himself and giving out every bit of it.

Domingo, 26 de octubre de 1997 – 5:00 AM Pledge and reading of Father's words in his suite at the Novotel Hotel in Macapá.

Afterward, we set our suitcases in the hall, where the local members loaded them into cars. In a flash we were aboard Air Mary for a brief, low, slow trip across the delta to the city of Belém (Bethlehem), located on the Amazon's other gaping mouth. We checked into the hotel and met in Father's suite.

For ten minutes, from 10:35 AM until 10:45 AM, Father sat three feet from me (him in a chair, me on the floor) and gave me the distilled, concentrated essence of a new mission. The feeling is that each spoken word contained volumes of instruction. I am being handed a dense element weighing tons per square centimeter. I must now break it apart and smelt it so I can understand what it's made of, can lift it and carry it home to my heart. Maybe then I can figure out where step one should be placed.

Father turned his attention to Mr. Joo, with me seated beside him, and continued speaking in Korean for another hour. At one point, Father said my name and began a long set of what seemed to be instructions in Mr. Joo's direction, but punctuated each thought with a direct look at me. Father paused to take a sip of water and Mr. Joo asked me, "How much of what Father just said did you understand?"

"I understood 'Larry,'" I told him.

Father asked Mr. Joo to explain to me what he had been speaking about. Mr. Joo told Father we were sharing a room and asked if it would be okay if he filled me in later. Father nodded. A few minutes later, Father broke into his heavily-accented English to unload some of his disappointment that in all these years I have never learned to speak Korean. I understand his feeling. It is frustrating in the extreme to pour out your whole heart to someone and have him just sit there, staring at you like a statue.

At lunch I sat at the opposite end of a small table for six. Father looked at me and began speaking in Korean again. Mr. Joo said that Father was expressing his concern that I had lost too much weight in my face. He said my stomach is still ample and that maybe I could find some way to lose some of the belly and get some back in the face. Overall, he said I was losing too much weight and he would give me some Chinese medicine to help. I thanked Father for his concern.

After lunch we headed down to the boats for our last day of fishing.

Fishing this afternoon was more like a boat party than serious fishing. We went only a little way upriver and tied up next to the shore all afternoon. I don't think anyone got even a nibble. Everyone was talking. Vicki listened to her meditation tapes with headphones. There was no great urgency to remain silent lest we scare the fish – since there were obviously no fish in the area.

Father looked at me sitting on the roof of the boat and asked, "Larry, are you happy with your wife?"

"Yes, very much so," I replied.

"Do you wish you had gotten an American wife instead?"

"No, Father. I don't think of Taeko as being of any particular race. She's just my wife and her character has a lot of different qualities I admire. I love her very much."

He nodded his head and I continued.

"Father, no matter what bad things may come my way, I feel I can never complain about my life because I have been so fortunate to have Taeko as my wife."

This was an immensely satisfying exchange for me. I had wanted to say that to Father for 18 years.

Lunes, 27 de octubre de 1997 – This is the fourth anniversary of my mother's passing into the spirit world.



We fly out after breakfast, headed south to Montevideo. Father's and Mother's chairs are across the aisle from each other, facing forward in the narrow cabin. Mr. Joo sits in a chair facing Father and Mr. Park sits in a chair facing Mother. Father has his shoes off and his feet resting on Mr. Joo's knees. Mr. Joo is massaging Father's feet. Mother, likewise, has her shoes off and her feet on Mr. Park's knees. Mr. Park is massaging Mother's feet. Everyone looks as contented as they can be.

As we pass over the headwaters of the Paraguay River near Cuiabá in southern Brazil, the pilot takes the plane down to under a thousand feet and we coast along. Father, Mother, Mr. Joo and Mr. Park talk among themselves.

The landing in Uruguay was in particularly turbulent conditions, caused by a thunderstorm. A shroud of clouds reduced us to zero visibility. The plane not only bounced like a trailbike, but it slammed from side to side as crosswinds played ping-pong with us. I have been in turbulence before, even on commercial airlines where True Parents were on the same flight. One might assume that flying with them would eliminate all fear of harm – either angels would hold up the plane or, if it did go down, you would have one very excellent spokesman when the group arrived at St. Peter's gate. But that's not the case. In the moment it's still scary as hell.

Mother looked concerned as we bounced along the sky, but Father grinned and laughed after the most

severe jolts. I wondered if Father is just being macho or after a lifetime that has included torture, starvation, prisons and being stalked by Kim Il-Sung's death squads, he simply doesn't fear whatever might await him on the other side or whatever it might take to get him there. Father gives the middle finger to Mr. Death.

In Montevideo we are taken to our rooms at the Victoria Plaza Hotel. I spend some time going over my notes, listing things Father has asked me to do and assigning priorities to everything I can.

In the evening, we gathered for dinner in Father's suite. Sitting around the big dining room table were Father, Mother, Mr. Joo, Mr. Park, Mr. Yoon, Vicki, two National Messiahs from Venezuela, the two film guys, maybe one or two others.

After dinner Mother whispered something into Father's ear. Then Father pulled out his wallet, smiled and said in English, "Larry, come here." Father opened his wallet and handed me everything in it. He didn't even count it or look at it. He just pulled out whatever he had and gave it to me.

This moment was an experience with Father I will remember for the rest of my life and beyond. Besides being a microcosm symbol of Father's relationship with the world, it stunned me that someone could love me and invest in me this much. Gratitude, love, truth, judgment, acceptance, repentance, peace – all the emotions one can imagine, came over me and down upon my head. Father gave me everything he had to give.

A few minutes later, Father asked me to share my impressions of the Amazon and what kinds of news stories I thought could come from the experience. I spoke about 10 minutes, with a certain amount of rambling. It ended well I thought, on a note of personal gratitude to Father and Mother. Then Vicki, Mr. Yoon, Mr. Park and Mr. Joo all gave their impressions of the trip.

The next morning, we went to the airport and waited awhile together in the private terminal waiting room. The Uruguayan members were standing around. Father called me over and I squatted on my haunches in front of him and Mother. He spoke for a bit urging me to work hard and be good. He ended with a big smile, a thumbs-up sign and a little click-click with his voice, the sound a rider makes to encourage his horse to keep moving. I smiled, thumbed-up and click-clicked back at my Father.

Shortly after, we parted ways as I left to walk over to the main terminal to get a commercial flight for the hop over to Buenos Aires. At the door I turned and we waved again.

