

## Joy and Laughter with True Parents in Alaska

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David Rogers together with his wife Karen and family had the privilege of serving True Parents in the "Ocean Providence" in Kodiak, Alaska.

This is one of the things we did in the Alaska summers. Jean Franquelin, a French brother who was really, really gifted with the ability to make unity and become close to these local families, made arrangements so that True Parents would actually fly up each summer and spend as much as two weeks there with the native people in the small towns. They would arrive on a fishing boat and many local people would come to see and greet them. This would be like True Parents' vacation.



This picture says it all. Mother is holding a pretty good-sized salmon along with Father. They really enjoyed this time together, and the native villagers really enjoyed having them. Face it, it's unusual for world leaders, so to speak, to come to the villages. But that was the whole point. Father really wanted Kim Il Sung to come to Alaska and get a real taste of American life - go fishing, be with the people, be in the boat, swap stories and, in the process experience world peace. Father was quite serious about it. Father was trying to set the scales for this to happen.

During the summer, True Parents always visited for an extended period, during which they could go fishing and meet the members and really encourage everybody to do their best to become skillful with such things as fishing in the wilderness (natural world), and to also be with the local people.

I found this picture and you can see the smiles on True Parents' faces. True Parents really treasured this time together so much - they were having so much fun.

One time I went with them down to Chignik and Mother asked me to find a home for them to stay at - could you imagine, a homestay with True Parents? It just so happened that there was one young widow and her family, kids who had lost their dad to a fishing accident. The dad was lost at sea, and the family really needed some help. So, we worked out an arrangement for Father and Mother to stay at their cabin, and we would provide an ample amount of support for the family to get through the summer and get their feet on the ground again. It was very much like "family" all the way through. Alaskans are like cousins to Koreans.

It was wondrous - I witnessed our church world leadership and especially the Japanese elder brothers coming in to visit also. Sometimes it'd be a half a dozen or a dozen leaders from Korea and Japan fishing all day, then long into the night, talking about whatever they talked about. I never learned Japanese or Korean, but it was quite spirited. Whatever it was, that was life in Alaska during the summertime fishing and talking.

Staying in the native home was really nice, very cozy. True Parents were so comfortable. You can see it in their faces. There are so many stories about Alaska - Father really loved Alaska. I remember hearing about when Father met one of the first people from Alaska; Dr. Pak told us how Father was so excited. He felt like he had met his "first real American," because the guy knew everything about Alaskan fishing. Father was so impressed by him (and it takes a lot to impress Father)!

I had a wonderful opportunity to be one of Father's captains for eight years and to be in the boat. There was always laughter - the laughter is what I remember most especially. I can still see it in my mind's eye, Father, then Mother coming on the boat a little bit later, and some coffee being brought down for everyone. On the one hand, it was like you were with the "Admiral." For that moment it was his entire universe. It might have been Colonel Pak telling a story or Father (who spoke in "English" for the sake of everyone listening), telling a story or whoever happened to be with us. The older the brothers and sisters that were on the boat, the more laughter there was. Father would kid them and then tell story after story. Father would just virtually hit his knees and then you heard a good tale, sharing with everybody. The moment was "sparkling" - just exquisite! Again, it was the laughter and the mirth, the fun. Father would ask a question and there'd be a lot of laughter and then somebody would speak for a few minutes, probably telling their story or a tale. This was just an amazing chance to be directly with Father, in a most intimate setting.