

A Single Dandelion Is More Precious than Gold

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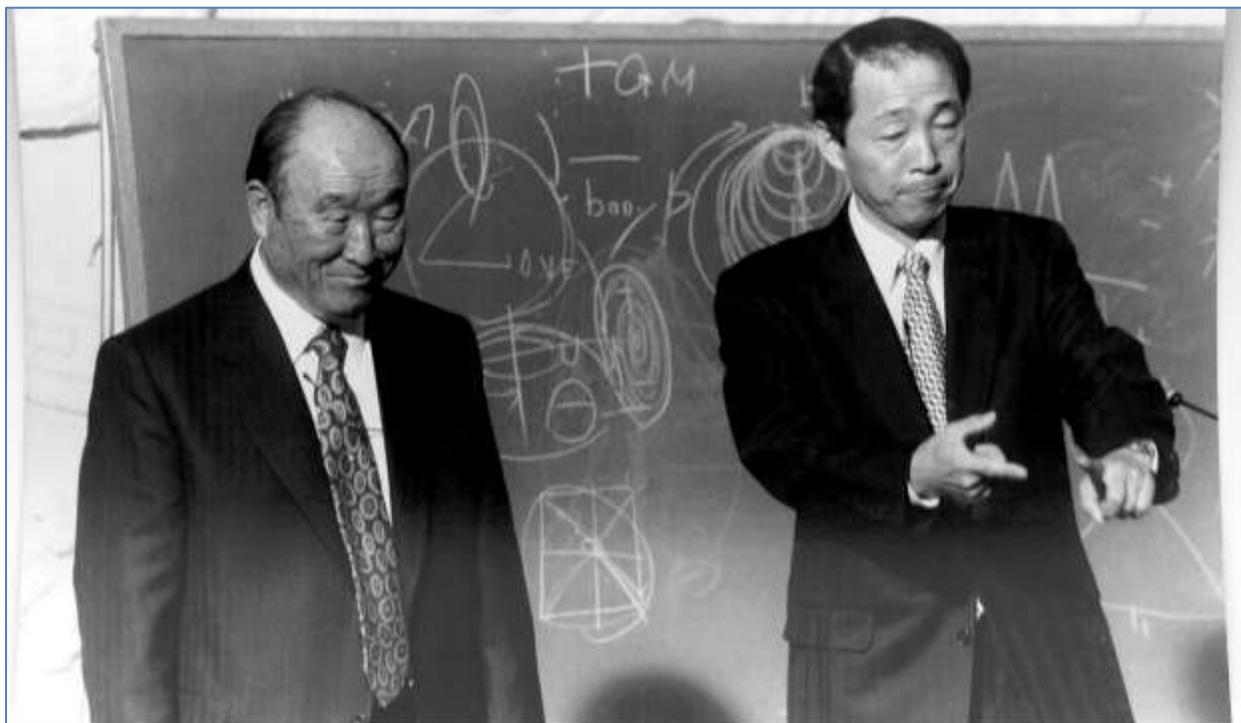


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People who advocate developing wetlands stress the economic benefits of such development. The Pantanal, however, provides plenty of economic benefit just as a wetland. The area has virgin forests of ebony pine, and the wood is hard with high density. Natives claim that a person could drive a spike into one of these trees and it would still live more than a hundred years. These trees are used to produce ebony, which does not rot and is said to last longer than iron. These trees are so large that a man cannot put his arms around them. Imagine what it looks like to have forests filled with such precious trees. I had some seedlings of these trees planted on four hundred hectares of land in the Pantanal. The trees our members planted have made the Pantanal even more beautiful.

It is human selfishness that is destroying nature. Human competition for the shortest route to economic success is the reason that the earth's environment has been damaged. We cannot allow the earth to be damaged any further. Religious people must lead the way in the effort to save nature. Nature is God's creation and His gift to humankind. We must work quickly to awaken people to the preciousness of nature and the urgent need to restore it to the rich and free state it enjoyed at the time of Creation.

Because it has become widely known that the Pantanal is a treasure trove, a struggle over its future has begun. The place that we should be protecting is about to become a battlefield for greedy humans. For the past ten years, I have been taking leaders from countries around the world to the Pantanal and sponsoring discussions on how to protect this region and the rest of the world's environment. I am gathering the world's environmental experts and scholars in order to encourage them to take an interest in preserving the Pantanal. I am working to stop the Pantanal from being destroyed by the merciless material desires of human beings.

As the environmental issues grow more serious, many environmental groups have sprung up. The best environmental movement, however, is the one that spreads love. People take care of things that belong to people they love. They do not, however, take care of or love the natural environment that God created. God gave this environment to humanity. It was His will that we use the environment to obtain food, to have it in abundance, and to experience the joy of living in the beauty of nature. Nature is not something to be used once and thrown away. Our descendants for many generations to come must be able to rely on it just as we have.

The shortcut to protecting nature is to develop a heart that loves nature. We must be able to shed a tear at the sight of even a blade of grass that we see as we walk along the road. We must be able to grab hold of a tree and weep. We must understand that God's breath is hidden inside a single boulder or a single gust of wind. To care for and love the environment is to love God. We must be able to see each creature created by God as an object of our love. With our spiritual eyes opened we could see that a single dandelion by the roadside is more valuable than the gold crowns of kings.