

Testimony: True Parents' meet Mikhail Gorbachev on April 11, 1990 - Part 3

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A brief look at the record

Mikhail Gorbachev initiated his policies of Glasnost (fostering more transparency and openness) and Perestroika (restructuring the Soviet political and economic system) soon after he became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985. Within a few years these policies had reduced strict government social controls, including citizens' personal freedoms, and permitted more natural market forces in the economy. Gorbachev softened the USSR's grip on the Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern Europe. In a 1988 speech at the United Nations, he declared, to the surprise of many, that all nations should be free to choose their own course and that the USSR would reduce its military presence in the Eastern Bloc nations.

Though Gorbachev's reforms were ostensibly intended to modernize the Soviet Union rather than undermine it, they unleashed forces of change that led to the fall of the communist governments of Eastern Europe and thus to the breakup of the Soviet bloc.

Some of those who were present in Moscow at the 11th World Media conference in the spring of 1990, or who went to the Soviet Union during the final years before its dissolution (to which President Gorbachev was himself one of three signatories), have testified that the meeting between True Parents and President Gorbachev was pivotal in that it gave him the strength to continue his hard work to resist communist hardliners and advance the reforms he had already been working on for five years – until they had irreversible effect throughout the communist world.

In his book *March to Moscow – The Role of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon in the Collapse of Communism*, Dr. Thomas Ward said the following in relation to the 11th World Media Conference and True Parents' meeting with Pres. Mikhail Gorbachev:

The Conference took place in the Convention Center of the Mezhdunarodnaya Hotel in Moscow in April 1990. While in Moscow for the Conference, the Reverend and Mrs. Moon met with USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev on April 11, 1990. In their deliberations, Rev. Moon urged

President Gorbachev to allow full religious freedom inside the U.S.S.R. and the two leaders explored possible ways for future cooperation in the areas of business and education....

Religious freedom actually came in. The registration of our church was even publicly reported in the press, almost as a demonstration of the remarkable change in policy that it represented. Those freedoms have since come under pressure with the passage of time, but it seems that, in the early 1990s, President Gorbachev was inspired to act on True Parents' strong encouragement.

Dr. Ward also noted other good practical results in *March to Moscow*:

The historic encounter between Rev. Moon and President Gorbachev led to the Soviet government supporting an effort to sponsor a visit to the United States for Soviet legislators where they participated in American Leadership Conferences (ALC). In December of 1990 and February of 1991, the ALC sponsored seminars for more than one hundred Soviet legislators (federal, republic and municipal levels) as well as delegations of cabinet ministers and members of parliament from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Soviet attendees included former KGB General Oleg Kalugin, Izvestia editor Lev Kornishev, and U.S.S.R. Minister of Justice Sergei Lushchikov.

From April 30 to May 2, 1991, the American Leadership Conference sponsored an unprecedented seminar and fact-finding tour for Soviet officials in the United States. This program included approximately 200 high-ranking government officials and political leaders from all 15 republics of the Soviet Union. This was the only time during this very intense period of Soviet history that any person, government, or private organization brought together representatives from all 15 Soviet republics.

In attendance were 26 deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet and some 75 deputies of the Supreme Soviet of various republics, as well as Republic vice-presidents, cabinet ministers, and ambassadors.

The officials who visited the United States received an introduction to CAUSA theory during their stay as well as practical and philosophical briefings on American democracy. While in the United States, the participants met with federal officials in Washington D.C. as well as with city and state officials and business leaders in New York City.

CAUSA sponsored a reception for them with New York business leaders at the New York Hilton. This led to lasting commercial ties being established, in some cases, between American corporations and CIS governments and industries.

Communist era missionary to the Soviet Union Peter Ladstaetter wrote in the final page of the book *Mission Butterfly*:

I watched leading personalities of the Soviet Union listening intently to the speeches of True Father, lectures about God, the fall of man and the course of restoration. To me, such events were even bigger miracles than the ones recorded in the Bible.

Dr. Thomas Ward also mentioned the surprising result of Father expressing his desire to President Gorbachev to be able to educate the Soviet youth:

Some 3,000 Soviet young people were sponsored by Rev. Moon to visit the United States and participate in an exchange program under the auspices of the International Educational Foundation (IEF), an organization founded by Rev. Moon to promote education, reconciliation, and dialogue amongst the young people of the free and the communist worlds.

Not only to the United States, as Peter Ladstaetter recalls in *Mission Butterfly*:

In July 1990, I had the opportunity to accompany the first delegation of 100 Soviet students on a visit to Japan. I had the mission to teach them the Divine Principle (in Russian). On the third day of giving lectures I was so moved that I cried for one solid hour, unable to stop my tears – I felt the great joy of God and countless spirits who were shedding tears of joy now that the children of the communist leaders were studying the Divine Principle.

Subsequent paragraphs in Dr. Ward's book indicate that Father and Mother's proactive efforts to communicate with Pyongyang to arrange a meeting there with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung also had their origins in the Moscow visit. Later the same year, some Soviet journalists participating in a fact-finding tour met with True Parents in Seoul. Some were going on from there to Pyongyang and, at Father's behest, they were willing to carry a message of goodwill to the higher leadership in North Korea.

This was one lesser known but highly significant result of the "Moscow Rally" – that it helped initiate the preparations for one in Pyongyang the following year.