

Dear Reader,

We recently concluded the 5th Assembly of the Mongolian Peoples Federation Conference in Seoul, Korea October 13-16, 2006. The event was a great success and on its foundation, True Father initiated the 4th World Tour centered on American Ambassadors for Peace. We are so delighted and privileged to be part of the True Parents Providence and have such precious opportunities to make a contribution.

As you may easily surmise, there is always a story behind everything and the Mongolian conference was no exception. This event was originally planned as a small gathering of about 100 guests primarily from the Asia regions. In the end the event grew to almost 200 and covered those of Mongolian descent from around the world. Our planning for this event was based on the initial conception of the event as a smaller gathering and as such we did not plan on or bring a large staff to Korea. Instead we depended on our local hosts to provide the needed manpower and resources to get the job done.

In the end we had a team of 5 international headquarter staff combined with a few seasoned Seil staff, and some local young people to help. Everyone did a great job and I am so proud of all of them, but I am under no illusions that our standard is high enough and our methods of doing things are perfect. With a small, young staff, we accomplished a great deal given the circumstances, but we are all capable of much more and should not settle for anything but the highest level of care for our guests and support for our leaders. If any areas of improvement can be found, lets take them and move forward!

Here are two excellent reflections from Bill Seilg, our most seasoned staff member, and Sunhee Mudget Ito, our youngest staff member. Their words tell the story very well indeed.

Frank LaGrotteria

MPFWP Oct. 13-16, 2006, Korea
Personal Reflection by Bill Selig

I have to write this before it starts to collect dust, if it hasn't already. There is no doubt in my mind that this offering was totally accepted by HF. After the Palace event, we got back to the hotel about 3 pm. I was standing in the lobby when Dr. Yang walked in. He saw no other leader, but he clearly wanted to share his heart, so he approached me. He was trembling with the news that TF had just given – launch the World Peace Tour in just a few days. Dr. Yang said he had no inkling such direction would come. In other words, barely in the space of one hour, HF had accepted the MPFWP offering and given the stunning news to mobilize all our resources for this providential tour. That to me was the news I was hoping to hear. It made it all worthwhile. After all, if HF is happy, then TF is happy and if they're both happy, then I'd better be happy.

On a more practical level, I thought this program's main accomplishment was to create a standard operating procedure for events at the Palace. This was the third event.

Formation, growth and perfection. The procedures have been clearly defined, proven and the pattern set.

Getting participants there, parking, seating, headtable, ushering, food service – I don't think we can do much better. We even initiated this time the mini-office. At the September event, I remember handing announcements to Dr. Walsh on little slips of paper. Robin Musiol wrote out by hand the inscription on the plaque. I felt so bad for Dr. Walsh, and from that situation -- born out of necessity -- was a new approach to support the emcee.

The next day, we set up the mini-office in the back of the meeting room. Dr. Walsh handed me a handwritten declaration and within minutes it was typed and returned to him in large point size.

If necessary, this method can be used to record notes during meetings or HDH. The point is that even with a small staff – but using Heaven's technology – we were able to attend the needs of our leadership and participants. That to me is very impressive.

Fortunately this event did not have many VIPs or program people (25 vs. 40 at Sept event). As last time, the majority of the program participants were not informed beforehand. Our only choice of action was to prepare and give them a letter upon their arrival. This doesn't always work as some arrive late. What is the message that runs through a person's mind after traveling for 20 hours and is asked to speak before a distinguished audience with no adequate preparation? It suggests we are not serious about the issues. Our participants are good people, and in fact, 99% of them unite with us, but I know with a little forethought we can do so much better. As I explained, my philosophy of conferencing is to make the guests look good – with dignity and substance.

I worked with the IIPC team this time. I would give them a grade of B. They generally cared for the guests and welcomed them. We dealt with all the usual problems – misplaced folders and glasses, sickness, lost baggage, etc. These members traditionally deal with their embassy guests on a more colleague-to-colleague basis, and don't really have the consciousness to attend to all details that the hospitality staff needs to have. It's a lack of snappiness to detail and thinking of the next step. Guests were received at the dining room, for example, but we did not aggressively take them to their seats. Although I was pulled strongly into the program arena, I tried to demonstrate our methods -- how to seat at meal functions using the "zone defense," seating at meeting times using the "red line" method, seating at headtable with "assigned seating" method. With more experience and training, they can learn how to handle the responsibility.

The office space was tight and cozy. I appreciated the curtain and semi-private area. The internet was very intermittent. Kazuki was a great help.

I reviewed the VIP list that Esther and Philippa created. I regretted not pushing harder to have VIP treatment for PM Corlot and give him a single room and high class of service to the airport.

I don't know if the seminar was recorded. It really doesn't have practical value, what is good is to have a person designated to summarize each session including testimonies, etc. a person who comes in the capacity to write, edit, speeches, etc. TGW asked me to comment on CHK's opening remarks. I found a few typos. It's too bad we can't get in the loop for all published speeches, namely TF. There's no excuse for those speeches to have typos. It reflects very poorly on Father's image.

The Peace Palace desperately needs a simple brochure as well as the whole CP complex. There's so much info to make a very interesting and tasteful brochure -- design, purpose, construction time, floor plans, etc. I got some mixed feedback on the issue -- what is the building? Museum or Palace? Museum is easy to understand, Palace is not.

Cell phones and walkie talkies were great. Can we get smaller walkie talkies? I appreciated being on the skype chat with the department leaders. I didn't insert myself, but I could see its value.

VIPs needs were small, only a couple received amenities. The opening dinner at the Cultural Hall and closing in Olympia halls were great.

We tried to work with TWG to make sure as many people a chance to speak as possible.

The continental secretary generals have to be tracked down. My personal relation with Genie and Amala is good. They understand my role and unite immediately with my requests. Finding people is always a challenge. Phones for them would be ideal.

Amb. Sanchez was scheduled to speak Fri. night but arrived too late. He said it was because the driver took several hours to bring the group to the hotel. I recommended him to Dr. Walsh to give the toast at the Palace. The next day at breakfast he told me how honored he was for that task.

This conference was an experiment in using only a small number of experienced staff who would oversee a group of well-intentioned, but less experienced staff. When I reflect back on the experience, I see our situation very similar to what the hotel is going through. At the staff dinner we had with the hotel management, they admitted to using part-time personnel to keep costs down. That decision, we all agreed, has negative repercussions -- the quality of service goes down. For example, the telephone operators and the concierge had poor English skills. UPF faces the same challenge. How to keep expenses down, but maintain quality of attendance.

Once again, I really appreciate this special opportunity to attend our True Parents. On behalf of the Selig family, I offer this reflection.

MPFWP Oct. 13-16, 2006, Korea
Personal Reflection by Sunhee Mudgett Ito

Registration:

Helena Hendricks led all registration and data-related issues and I assisted. There were a lot of last minute changes that came in, for example on the Korean side. We suddenly had a list of Korean guests to register but we didn't receive their forms until the day before, and even then it was only half of the total, and the information we received (position, organization, etc.) was insufficient (all "IIFWP – Korea"). In the end, we had to wait until Won Chul Kim came. We went over the list he had received together but extra people were thrown in at the last minute.

The materials for the packets came later than we had initially expected so registration started several hours after we had hoped. Fortunately, the number of packets we had to prepare was less than half of the amount we prepared for the previous conference, and we also had ushers available to assist with the packet and name badge assembly.

We had Mrs. Elizabeth Kang and a Korean usher (in rotation) help us with registration itself and split up the participants among us. It was helpful to have the Korean usher there to handle all the Korean participants because we didn't have to worry about the language/cultural barrier. Participants mostly just trickled in and there was some backup now and then, but I never found it overwhelming, particularly since the conference was "English-speakers only." Helena dealt with the problem cases.

On the one conference day, Helena and I sat at the information table during breaks and answered questions, handed out some printed materials, and so on.

Ushers:

They worked hard but I think that there was definitely room for improvement. Communication seemed to be difficult at times. I think part of it was inexperience with what we expect. For example, I once asked for the ushers to place the evaluations on the chairs in the hall. I went to check and they were completely askew. They had asked about how they were to be placed but were apparently told it didn't matter (sort of an "any which-way" answer). So I asked them to help me arrange them nicely. To me it seemed either the direction was misunderstood or that the incorrect direction was given, and that either way, they didn't know that a certain standard of neatness in presentation (as in respect for the guests) would have been appropriate regardless of the direction.

Palace Event:

It was exciting and was the highlight of the conference for me. I think, though, that it would be a good idea to mark our tables more clearly because it saves a lot of confusion and unnecessary shuffling of our guests from table to table. The hospitality team was concentrated in the front, Kazuki watched the door, and I was near the door guiding people to move towards the front. It was difficult to watch both sides because I was the only one in the middle so I had people coming at me, people coming behind me, and then people returning towards me because I hadn't noticed that the seats were filled.

I think I could have worked on managing that better. There wasn't a lot of space to move around between the tables so I felt bad about having to reseat participants who had sat at the wrong table. The idea of assigning tables is a good one.

The handing out of books in Korean to predominantly non-Korean speaking guests seemed to me a waste of materials. Perhaps they can be left out of packets for our guests. The UPF-Korea staff could request a certain amount for their guests. I don't really know how to accommodate the Korean-speaking guests living outside of Korea. Maybe we could bring a couple books back and leave it on a book table or request that Korean team grab a few extra and hand it off to the hospitality team.

I was very, very grateful to be able to attend and support such an amazing and providential event at the Palace. Receiving the flowers from True Parents was such a blessing. Kazuki and I also helped with presentation of robes and crowns by receiving them from the stage and placing them on a table on the wall. Those were whisked away by the Palace staff members, who placed them on carts and took them to the museum.

In the future, it might be good to consider whether and how many presentation trays would be needed before for the program before the event starts. It didn't occur to me to save a couple of trays before they were taken away and I went on a bit of a wild goose hunt to retrieve them for the conferment of the honorary doctorates. Somehow, it didn't enter my head to find and ask Mr. Hong. There was some time before that part of the program began so it became an interesting adventure, as it turned out, but would have been much more difficult if I hadn't been able to speak Korean, which in retrospect is probably the reason going through Mr. Hong wasn't my first thought.

Hotel:

Small and very much a 3-star place. The fact that it was small made it easier to run errands but the overall atmosphere didn't feel so professional. The service wasn't all that great. This is only the 3rd conference in Korea that I've been to, and the first time, I stayed at the Sun Moon campus. So my only point of reference is the Hotel Lotte World and this place doesn't really compare. The head staff seemed helpful but the staff itself wasn't always service-oriented. Very slow in many cases. One bellboy brought a cart to the office, then left. The food wasn't especially appetizing.

Office:

It was nice that our office was not in the basement and that our carpet didn't shed. In exchange, however, the hallway smelled awful most of the time. I think it was coming from a food service place across the hall on that floor.

The office was quite small and got very crowded once the guests and regional staff/members came to the hotel. Our storage area was also small (the window sill) and hard to access, as well. I would say that overall, the size of the office allowed a sort of cross-pollination of our work and provided a much more intimate look at the behind the scenes workings of the conference as a whole. It was a good way to learn how each of the departments goes about getting their work done. This was ultimately very valuable.

Internet:

Huge problem. The internet was slow in general and entering data so took much longer than it should have. The network kept giving us trouble so Kazuki put my laptop on the hotel's wireless service. But even then, the internet or database responsiveness was incredibly fickle and would only give short windows of accessibility. It was very frustrating, especially given the time crunch we were in and even more so because

Helena's computer got a virus. At one point, I was using 2 computers at a different station, switching between whichever browser opened up first.

Hospitality:

It was interesting to notice, during the couple staff meetings we had at night, that there is quite a difference the internal attitudes of the IIPC and UPF staff. Personally, UPF staff seemed more businesslike, practical, whereas IIPC staff seemed more "churchy," for lack of a better adjective, and somewhat less professional in comparison.

I didn't have much first-hand interaction with the hospitality team. But my general impression was that our care of the guests is generally left to the local regions until they come to the conference, at which point it becomes very "in-the-moment," care, hopefully with the result of a good long-term impression and relationship. IIPC is a local group so they seem to be more used to long-term care but may not be used to the intensity of caring for guests at a conference and the immediacy and aggressive attitude that is often required. Perhaps it's a matter of training and experience.

So I think it might be beneficial to bring some core hospitality staff from the US as a means of training. This would be mutually beneficial to both UPF and IIPC; we train the local peace ambassadors, and they assist us during the conferences and any new, relevant concepts and mind-sets they pick up may become usefully applied to caring for their own contacts.

Overall:

This conference was much more intimate than the previous and thus a good crash course on UPF conferences. I learned a lot just by listening to—or often unavoidably overhearing—the conversations taking place in our office and by being pulled into various situations that needed an extra hand. I tend to find myself playing a mediator's role in many situations because of the language barrier and this was definitely the case during this conference.

The conference was so short and intense that I had much more work to do this time but being in the supporting, not leadership, position, I don't think I got as much of the stress that the other core staff members did. I feel I could have been more focused and supportive of Helena and will definitely work on that.