

True Father's Hidden Ocean Providence Project in Las Vegas - Testimony

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On March 24, 2014, we invited True Mother to the opening ceremony of Ocean Providence Las Vegas branch.

Three years before, on July 27th 2011, True Father had convened a meeting with CEO Chairman Furuta, President Yashiro, and Vice President Jack Sato to Kodiak, Alaska. Wishing to rebuild the foundation of Ocean Providence, he instructed them to begin a "new ocean providence." One of the important conditions for this providence was that it start from Las Vegas. Therefore, with this opening ceremony presided over by True Mother, we were able to realize True Father's wish as well as receive True Mother's congratulatory message. We were truly grateful for such a heavenly blessing.

I came to Las Vegas five years ago in September 2009. Until that time, I was the sales manager of True World Foods Los Angeles, which had become a subsidiary of the UCI group (Unification Church International controlled by Hyun Jin Moon's supporters) by then. TWF (True World Foods), which was founded as a part of True Parents ocean

providence vision, had established the largest network in the U.S. of any Japanese seafood business, with branch offices in all major cities. However, we did not have an office in Las Vegas, which True Parents had chosen as the battlefield of the final providence. This city's food industry was a market already filled with many competitors, who all had stable foundations. Because of intense price competition, the city was known to be particularly difficult for new businesses. Additionally, 2009 was a tough economic time, right after the famous "Lehman shock".

It was during this period that the establishment of the Las Vegas branch office was decided upon, and I was appointed as the branch manager. Both chefs and owners of restaurants in Los Angeles who had been my good clients were worried for my sake and warned me emphatically. They said things like: "Who on earth made such a decision, and for what reason?" "That city's business condition has become rotten and businesses are dying." "Are you really OK going there?" Indeed, when I did some research myself, I found out that most of the major hotel businesses in Las Vegas were in deficit management, and the city of Las Vegas itself seemed to be falling into financial collapse. Even Station Casinos, a large scale business group following close behind MGM and Caesars Entertainment, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The more I researched, the more negative information I got.

I knew that extra effort would be needed to open the new Las Vegas branch and to make it a successful business. However, this decision was not made by any business perspective, but by the perspective of the Divine Principle. Thinking of True Parents who are working so hard to change this infamous "Sin City" to the "Sun City, the final providential land," I had made a strong determination that this was the time to show my own faith. This might sound familiar to what any faithful church member might say; however, if I had not pushed myself like that, I was likely to be crushed by the negative reality I faced.

Previously I had worked in the CARP organization for a long time, so I was used to pioneering new places. This time, however, I was already over 50 and losing my physical strength. More than myself, I was worried about leaving behind my wife who was challenged by serious health issues, and my sons who were still dependent on me. I was especially worried about my wife Michiko who had suffered from a stage 2 breast cancer that almost took her life. We were told by her doctor that she needed to avoid stress most of all. So I was concerned even more, because for a wife to have her husband transferred to a new work place away from family is always stressful, even for those in good health. When I told my wife about the new post and mission that I was assigned to, she was taken aback at first. However, she seemed to digest it, having previously accepted the possibility of sometimes having a stormy life after the Blessing with me.

Going to Las Vegas was unexpected for me too. True Parents had already started the providence in Las Vegas, and I heard there would eventually be a branch office opened by TWF, but I never thought it

would be done by me. No one wants to risk a calm life by making a wrong decision and end up regretting it. There is a saying: "in life there are uphill and downhills, but there is also a no way hill; the moments someone overcomes this no way hill, the person becomes true and real." Suddenly I was confronted with this same kind of no way hill.

During this time, Chairman Furuta visited Los Angeles and told me: "we tried opening an office in Las Vegas twice before and there wasn't any success. You are the third person to try. It is surely a difficult place. However, to support True Parents, TWF also must stand and make an effort. We are not just doing business; we are doing heaven and earth restoration. So you too have to hang in there and strive for it!" These words spoken out of his faith and determination were just like God's words at my departure.

Usually for the establishment of this kind of branch office, it's best to do marketing research plus establish some business foundation beforehand by making deliveries from the nearest base of business, in this case, Los Angeles. However, the establishment of this local office in Las Vegas was one with such providential significance that we did not have time to waste. It was truly pioneering from a zero foundation. Normally, opening any new branch office is unavoidably expensive. However, because our aim was to reduce costs as much as possible, we rented a vacant space in a small lunch box factory, and started with just one delivery van. This factory was also on the verge of bankruptcy, and there were many problems with the refrigeration and drainage systems that are vital for a seafood business. In order to make profit quickly, expenses were to be kept to a minimum. Therefore, we only prepared the minimum manpower and equipment. At the time, our team consisted of only me and Steve Pierce; pioneer branch specialist Yuh from HQ was sent to oversee and assist until we had succeeded.

First, we needed to prepare our sales products, but we were not able to develop our inventory when we did not know well the needs of our customers. In fact, as a newcomer in the area we needed a strong and varied product line similar to the established competitors if we were to capture new business. Furthermore, in order to speed up our growth, we should even market new products that other companies did not have. Otherwise customers would not have any reason to choose us over our competitors. While trying to come up with a unique product line of our own, we became aware that our competitors were good at high volume species like tuna and salmon, but were weak in Japanese imports. We thought this could be our niche market and aimed for a breakthrough using catchphrases like: "the company with the most direct fish delivery system from Tsukiji (the world renowned fish market in Tokyo)" "we can do same day deliveries of live sweet shrimp, live abalone, and live halibut from the California coast"

To accomplish this, a delivery van was sent to Los Angeles on Tuesdays and Fridays, the days of fish arrivals from Japan, for immediate transit back to Las Vegas. Steve and I did the driving in rotation. However, due to our age, we were actually not the most appropriate staff to do this for a prolonged period of time. Yet we had no other choice in this beginning phase of the company. At the end of the workday, one of us would head to LA in our van; on the following early morning, we would hurriedly load up and drive the four and a half hours back to Vegas in time to satisfy customers' delivery needs. We did this twice a week. Japanese imports became our breakthrough point, such as the tip of a drill. If we broke through with this, we could then start selling other products, particularly high volume species, plus the full line of frozen products.

Early morning on Oct. 29, 2009, I drove our first route. Highway 15 from LA to Las Vegas continued endlessly through the desolate desert, and suddenly the mega-city Las Vegas appeared. High rise hotels faintly visible in the morning mist towered above as if to swallow me at any moment. Would I ever be able to bring victory in such a monstrous city known as Sodom and Gomorrah? Such anxiety welled up within me. Now I can still remember how I entered this city singing "Live with the Lord" (Japanese holy song #67) like it was yesterday. "Now born anew by the Lord, the old has gone, this new man, new life flows like a river, that love shines as a light, I serve the Lord, keep my pledge, I will live with the Lord forever." This is a holy song not sung in the US, but whenever I faced hardships in my life on the front line, I sang this song, felt encouraged, and overcame countless challenges. Whenever I sang this song, I remember the fundraising period during my CARP training days. Almost thirty years ago, one snowy winter morning in Japan's Yamagata prefecture, our van stopped at the edge of an unknown village. When I got out at my fundraising area and shut the van door, all I could see was this land covered with white fresh snow. It was impossible to distinguish between the road and the rice fields. I walked through the sparkling snow illuminated by the morning sunlight, each step making a crisp sound. Mixed feelings of anxiety and commitment to do God's will filled me. I walked down the snowy road to the farthest farmhouses singing this holy song. When I drove into Las Vegas for the first time, I had the exact same feeling as when I stepped on the fresh snow. This was the beginning of a new journey within myself on a road filled with both insecurity and joy.

Fortunately, the strategy of direct delivery from Los Angeles was a success. By addressing demands for the highest quality Japanese fish, we were able to start business with some well-known nationwide chain restaurants, such as Nobu, Sushi Roku, Blue Ribbon, and Sushi Samba. We started off with these Japanese imports, and from there were able to expand to sales of other products. Once we knew our customers' needs, we could then start stocking inventory with minimal waste. Sometimes a key account

would need an urgent order, and could not wait for an overnight shipment from LA. Therefore, having a local office combined with express LA shipments became our strong advantage over competitors. In the beginning, I thought we would be able to do business with just the express shipments from LA, without a local office. However, I was impressed by CEO Furuta's foresight, when he made the decision to build the local office in Vegas. It further signified building a base of True Father's ocean providence here.

Around this time as the business started to get on track, True Parents called Chariman Furuta, Mr. Kamiyama, and pioneer manager Yuh (representing the TWF-LV branch) to Cheon Hwa Gung. They rejoiced in finally being able to establish the Vegas branch. However, it had been decided not to have the official opening ceremony until it had turned a profit over the break-even point. Our next goal, therefore, was to go over the break-even point in the shortest possible time.



As alluded to previously, the Las Vegas Japanese seafood business dispersed its market shares into three main Japanese competitors. The combined monthly gross sales of these companies roughly equals 2.3 million. We had to squeeze into this small market and then expand our share. In selling, product appeal and sales capabilities are the important factors. Regarding the product appeal part of this formula, we were able to prepare a superior product line up compared to the other companies. We were fortunate to have the support of TWF west block manager/HQ vice president Shimada and TWF LA branch manager Kikuchi. The other factor, salesmanship, depends largely on each individual sales person. The basis of sales is aggressive salesmanship, effective service, and good collections.

In the case of Las Vegas, the city itself was almost in a condition of bankruptcy. It would be nearly fatal if even one customer went bankrupt before paying us. At that same time, I heard a miserable story from one of our friends. The owner of 3 Japanese restaurants did a moonlight flight, escaping from all debts. The customers that are not creditworthy are the ones that approach you smiling bigger than anyone else. A new company like ours could not afford to step on any land mines.

At first we made a list of potential customers, excluding three groups: those at a high risk for collection problems, small scale businesses with low volume of purchases, and geographically remote locations. The resulting list consisted of 60 out of the initial 200 prospects. Of those, the Japanese restaurants located in major hotels had by far the highest sales volumes, from \$60,000 to \$100,000 monthly. Therefore, we focused our efforts into these businesses.

Our company deals with Japanese seafood products, so I thought it would be a good idea for Steve to concentrate only on facility management, relationship with health depts., and legal matters. But once we started our sales activity with hotels, without his involvement, it would have been difficult to succeed. The restaurants inside hotels were either hotel-run or in very close partnerships. All product entering the hotel had to be on approved purchase orders. It also had to be processed by hotel receiving and accounting staff. Even if I made great sales agreements with all the chefs, if the item numbers, unit measures and prices did not exactly match hotel data, we would not get paid correctly. Furthermore, hotel receiving staff was highly subjective, and the slightest perceived irregularity would cause product rejection. With Steve managing and organizing these issues, I could focus on sales activities. As well as such duties, Steve approached Italian and other non-Japanese restaurants and increased our customer base.

Product preparation was done every morning by myself and Steve under the direction of Manager Yuh. In large branches such as Los Angeles where I worked formerly, everything is done through specialization of labor, so I never had to do any filleting or salmon or tuna. However, in this pioneering branch, each of us had to perform all processing tasks ourselves. I kind of enjoyed doing these new tasks, instead of feeling any burden.

The three of us came to Las Vegas without our families, and rented a corporate housing facility together. Perhaps it resembled a monastery. By coincidence, True Father often made mention of three

international members living together for a mission, particularly from Korea, Japan, and America. Middle-aged men found themselves taking turns making daily meals. However, it was not entirely easy due to our ages and different cultures. In a way it was like eating kimchee, natto, and blue cheese in the same restaurant. Maybe this was some kind of indemnity condition. Looking back on it, this unity was surely one key to the success of the business. After six months Mr. Yuh transferred to help another branch. Soon after he left, Mr. John Tei Lee, one of True Parents event translators, joined us. Our international fusion cuisine continued.



During the second half of 2010, True Father had many events and proclamations in Las Vegas. He expanded the ocean providence to Lake Mead, continuing to set up harsh, heartfelt conditions in spite of his aged body and health condition. Around the same time, OSDP workshops began. UC members from all over the world gathered in Las Vegas. With all the heartfelt conditions made by many Unificationist brothers and sisters through the distribution of True Parents autobiography, sin city was being cleansed spiritually. It also brought heavenly fortune, and the economy of the city was gradually recovering.

Our company's performance had also improved a lot. By this time the shape of our company had been set consisting of a staff of four. I was grateful to work in this city where True Parents were living, even though there was so much hardship. It felt like a blessing. Since Mr. Lee worked in our office, he provided a feeling of connection to True Parents. Whenever we had time, we attended OSDP workshops and other events without fail. It was also fortunate to sometimes be able to attend True Parents Hoon Dok Hae services. The Holy Palace was located within a 20 minute drive from our office. When True Parents were in town, we often delivered their favorite fish, Orange Roughy and tuna.

We were already known as a UC related business among the local restaurant industry. We did not introduce ourselves as such, but our competitors did not fail to let customers know about our identity. Then some customers would ask: "So, are you selling fish? Or marble vases? Or surname seals?" (Which were our Japan fundraising items used by the media to accuse us) "What is Mr. Moon doing in this town?" In this way, we had to explain things other than fish sales. Also, some competitors asked: "Are you getting paid or selling flowers every night for your living?" "Is it true that you brainwash tuna?"

However, similar to our experiences in Los Angeles, we learned that through communication and direct give and take with us, customers sooner or later understand that Moonies are different than how the media portrays them; they are actually not strange at all. The basic of sales teaches to sell yourself before your products. We can sell products only after personally gaining a customer's trust and respect. Our company represents True Parents and our church. If we were to act irresponsibly or betray someone's trust, we would be judged and our church's public image would suffer. Conversely, if we are sincere and responsible, we are in the position to be a good witness.

In the world of business, nothing goes perfectly without any obstacles. So, too, our new company faced problems all the time. After we started sales with some new customer, soon one of our competitors would take it back. Many times we thought we reached a dead end. Furthermore, to achieve success we had to struggle with our own HQ office on certain business matters. Whenever we took one step forward, we got pulled one step back, as in some kind of seesaw. Yet I always sensed there would be a way for us if we did not give up, but instead moved forward even through difficulty.

In this way, our company expanded its foundation in Las Vegas and reached monthly sales over \$300,000. As a pioneering branch, we had finally brought a certain success. However, at this same time the UCI problem was casting its shadow upon us gradually. Chairman Furuta, who had advanced the Las Vegas providence, was discharged. The content of the TWF annual general meeting attended by all leaders became noticeably altered.

In February 2011, President Yashiro, who had been leading TWF since its beginnings, was discharged and all board officers were replaced with people from UCI under control of the Kwak group (Hyun Jin Moon's supporters). Seeing these changes threw all employees of TWF in a huge commotion. As previously noted, food wholesaling is a tertiary system wherein sales reps gain trust of decision makers and gradually build relationships. There are some things that can never be understood by anyone who

does not have this field experience. The discharge of Chairman Furuta and President Yashiro, who had been wholeheartedly working towards the realization of True Fathers' ocean providence from the ground up, was not the desire of True Parents. Shortly after, agitated branch managers gathered at Cheon Hwa Gung in Las Vegas, and received True Father's words and instructions directly. In this meeting, True Father clarified our mission and purpose once again.

My personal story begins back in 1986, when I was 26. I had just come to the US as a public missionary for CARP. It was the time of Hyo Jin Nim's world CARP convention; supposedly we were mobilized for only 3 months. Before coming, I struggled a lot about going to a foreign land. But I had a dream which settled my mind. I was inside what must have been the World Mission HQ. Covering the walls and floors I saw the wills of many martyrs. The thought came to me that our church was based upon all their foundation of heart. As I stood in a daze, True Father appeared and grabbed me by the collar, saying: "Tanaka! You are going to do this!" Over his shoulder, I saw people with many different hair colors. This dream was so real to me that I jumped out of my futon. At that moment I mind up my mind that going to America was my mission in God's Will.

For thirty years since, I worked in CARP activities, STF, and second generation education. At one point, however, due to my wife's illness and for the sake of my children, I decided to work at the local branch of TWF. Since my coming to America was for a providential purpose, I at least wanted to work for a related business. Not only me, but so many staff members of TWF had come to America for the same reason. Once they completed some initial mission, they felt similar to me in desiring to remain as connected as possible. In line with the purpose to contribute to America's providence, working at TWF was more than for the sake of earning a livelihood. The underlying motivation remained to attend True Parents.



Immediately after hearing about the Las Vegas meeting in 2011, UCI HQ became concerned about this gathering. They called an emergency meeting which brought all management staff to company HQ in New Jersey. They interrogated each person about what had occurred in the meeting with True Father. Two lawyers for UCI then presented explanations for recent staff changes, along with new rules and company organization. This writer cannot divulge details except to say that legal contents went on endlessly, and I felt unable to digest all the information. The one point I felt most uncomfortable with was the statement that in order to protect our true purpose, we must not follow the direct commands of the founder. This founder means True Parents of course.

Legally, some ideas being promoted seemed logical, but the underlying current could only be sophistry. This company was actually moving in a completely different direction than the desire of True Parents. Additionally, all managers were asked to sign new agreements. If they did not sign, retirement benefits would be withheld. Also, a non-competition clause was included. Once resigned or fired, they could not work in the same profession for one year. While this is relatively common in the business world, it was shocking to all of us who had always cherished a corporate culture which treated everyone like family. For us, family naturally had to include True Parents.

Our Vice President Jack Sato strongly opposed this series of actions, and was dismissed. He requested to stay even as a driver, but the new board members forced him to resign. Mr. Matsuda who would later become the GM of Ocean Providence Las Vegas resigned on his own. Many of us were working so long to build a business focusing on True Parents will and philosophy. Yet since that year, TWF became a business for the sake of business. It is possible to accept this, because everyone needs a career in order to make a living. Anyone is still free to donate and do church activities. I considered having hope and waiting for all these problems to be solved in time, even resolving the relationship to True Parents.

The sales records for our Las Vegas branch continued to rise favorably; however, I still had very complicated feelings about all these changes. I think this was because of being in the very unique town of Las Vegas. If I was still in the Los Angeles office, trying to overcome this hardship with other church

staff, and living with my family where we could encourage each other, I would not have struggled so much. However, working alone in Las Vegas, I couldn't help but be affected by many things.

Mr. Lee, who translated for True Parents, provided us with their recent news and thoughts. Even at his advanced age, True Father was investing himself in Lake Mead from morning until night. He was not there to have fun fishing. Rather he was fighting a harsh battle to restore things that were lost for the sake of heaven and earth. Mr. Lee as served as boat captain for these fishing expeditions.. Conditions on Lake Mead in the summer are severely hot, and in winter equally cold. Mr. Lee was relatively young and strong. Yet when I observed how exhausted even he became, I felt more empathy for True Father. This made me wonder if I were doing enough for True Parents as a child and as a blessed family.

On July 27, 2011 a serious incident occurred in Kodiak, Alaska. In that town is a fish processing company called ISA which is under UCI. Also in Kodiak is North Garden, an important base for True Parents work in North America. It was there that the Ceremony of the Settlement of Eight Stages has been proclaimed. ISA is one of the companies that True Parents poured a lot of investment into. It was a frontline base of the ocean providence, where many missionaries from Japan were mobilized. It stands on the foundation of extraordinary hardships. Always whenever True Parents visited North Garden, they would always be welcomed at the airport by the ISA president together with church members. This time, however, there was no one waiting for True Parents arrival. Even in the nicer Alaskan weather of summertime, imagining our True Parents waiting in that lonely small airport made us feel truly sorry.

This had never happened before the UCI changes had transpired. True Father was disappointed and hurt by seeing this loss of faith from the members. He spoke clearly and strongly to ISA employees. "This behavior of UCI, and the Kwak group, is not for the will of True Parents. Do you have the heart to welcome True Parents? Do you belong to True Parents or to ISA? You have to become one with True Father with absolute faith. I have invested millions of dollars, brought over missionaries from Japan, and truly loved the fishing industry to create this company. You should never steal something that belongs to True Parents." He ordered that a video be made of this speech which can be seen on You Tube: [youtube/8efTqyThBxM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8efTqyThBxM).



During this time, True Father requested that ISA be dismantled internally and reformed under the direction of True Parents. The US Continental leader Bishop Kim, who translated Father's words at the time, spoke in detail about these contents at the opening ceremony of Ocean Providence Las Vegas a few years later. True Father then called Chairman Furuta, President Yashiro, and Vice President Sato, who all had been dismissed from TWF, to North Garden. There he instructed them to start a new ocean providence. One of the conditions was that it start from Las Vegas.

I was able to know about these events soon after they occurred, because our co-worker Mr. Lee was also called to Kodiak, as an interpreter for True Father. Since he became involved in actions contrary to UCI directions, he received a notice of dismissal from TWF HQ. When I heard that one of our own staff, who helped me develop the Las Vegas pioneering branch, got fired, I felt some righteous indignation. Together with the knowledge of many colleagues who were dismissed or resigned, and upon hearing True Father's bold words, I finally reevaluated the position I was in. I decided right then to submit a letter of resignation on February 6th, 2012. While I was still in the position of receiving a salary from TWF, it was hard to say what I really thought. But once I decided to quit, I realized that this was my only chance to honestly speak out for other voiceless employees. I quickly sent my letter entitled "Resignation Statement" via email to TWF HQ.

Dear Headquarters,

I am writing this letter to officially tender my resignation from TWF effective February 6th, 2012. I am truly grateful that I have been guided and taken care of by many of you working for this TWF Group. Three years ago, by the order of former Chairman Furuta, I received the special mission of opening the TWF branch in Las Vegas, where our founder and wife resided. After the Lehman shock, it seemed impossible to start from zero in this business arena crowded with many competitors. However, with the full support of the LA branch, VP Shimada, and Manager Kikuchi, we were able to achieve profitability in a short time. Only in this city could I have had the precious experience of attending our founder and wife so closely. However, in so doing I left

my ailing wife behind, and had to work alone, making a rather big sacrifice on the family level. Witnessing all the recent radical personnel changes among UCI/TWG HQ, I have come to feel that it is no longer worthwhile to sacrifice my family any more by continuing my work in Las Vegas. Therefore, I have decided to resign from this company. Although I am a person who is now leaving the company, I will continue to pray for TWF development, and I have two favors to ask.

First, I would like you to immediately stop the lawsuit against former Chairman Furuta and former President Yashiro. They are both persons who have rendered distinguished service and contributed enormously to TWG's growth. It is outrageous to file a lawsuit against them for any reason. It really makes me wonder how any of this could be part of a corporate culture of "One Family under God." Although they are no longer employees of the company, they are still our church family members. Any litigation against senior employees degrades human dignity, inside or outside the company.

Secondly, please change the way of conducting the morning meetings carried out in quarterly and annual conferences. Many employees are not UC members, and time to fulfill the whole agenda is always limited. It is absurd to delay the start of important conferences for sometimes more than an hour. This is rude for all employees who are not UC members, and creates an unhealthy corporate culture. If the leaders of UCI/TWG are so intent on having religious meetings, why not have the plenary session on Saturday afternoon rather than Friday? This would clearly divide the business agendas from the non-business agendas. This would reduce cost and be more efficient. Staff from small branches like Las Vegas highly value time out of necessity.

Thirdly, HQ has created an unacceptably strict contract regarding resignation, and has made its acceptance mandatory. This will significantly affect TWF quality of leadership. Capable staff will not quit if the company is attractive. It would be better to discharge the more unskilled staff and even allow them to migrate to competitors, making TWF stronger. Isn't it the role of company HQ to make an atmosphere that the most talented will not want to leave? America is a very legalistic country, so a variety of corporate laws is necessary. Yet, what if the heart of employees was attracted by virtue rather than binding them merely by laws and contracts? In Confucius' "Analects" in the chapter on political philosophy, he suggests having national governance not by laws, punishment or force, but with virtue. The former is called the Way of Domination and the latter the Way of the King. The Qin Empire adhering to the Way of Domination quickly perished, but the Han Empire which applied the Way of the King prospered for a long time. Government without virtue creates broken organizations like Communism, and creates antipathy of the people. TWF will prosper more by adhering to these principles and reducing the emphasis on law and litigation. On the other hand, using force and legalistic methods will erode trust and weaken the organization.

Lastly, the leadership training in Montana seems totally inappropriate to me. Maybe it is well received by some, but I see little value in focusing on the mountains when our traditional training has always been at sea. Since TWF has a corporate structure, the biases and tastes of the chairman should not hold sway. I recommend that training include participation of all employees. The actual work place is anyway the greatest training ground, particularly for our industry. That is where I learned the most personally. Why not conduct an anonymous vote? Through listening to the most valuable asset of any organization, its people, I wish and pray that this company becomes a more free, open and bright place.

As in the old Confucius saying, "If people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state." If my content were to be considered and utilized, I believe there could be great development for TWF. Please forgive any discourtesy. It is solely written with my love for the company.

Feb. 6th, 2012

Seijiro Tanaka

If I may say so myself, I have the character traits of a typical Shizuoka Prefecture citizen: mild and good-natured. Even now, I look back and wonder why I sent this kind of resignation note. During that time, I sent this letter as if the spiritual world was pushing me to do so. Unfortunately, only one employee's opinions would not usually be taken into consideration. After that, many more faithful and distinguished leaders resigned from TWF.

I left the Las Vega branch in the hands of Mr. Shigeta, who came from Los Angeles to take over management. I apologized to all our customers, and went home to Los Angeles. The first week I couldn't get myself to do anything. When I finally started to look for a new job, I heard that Mr. Sato, who had

also resigned from TWF, was trying to open a company in Las Vegas. Remembering Father's speech in Kodiak, I eagerly wanted to work for this company in some way; so I flew to Las Vegas.

By the time I arrived, the sun had set, and the endless desert was nowhere in sight. From the skies over Vegas, the lights of this dazzling town shone brilliantly like flowers blooming beautifully in the darkness. Seeing those lights from the airplane revived my memories of the past two years working in Las Vegas. I sincerely desired to work once again in this town where True Parents lived. When I got to the company and told them I was ready to join, I was told at first that it was not ready to hire. Somehow, I became accepted into the company by my sincere pleas.

I was surprised to hear the company's name: Ocean Providence." Such a name is very fitting and straight forward, derived from the founder's vision. None of our Japanese customers could pronounce the word "providence" correctly. We made effort to teach them, but so many would say things like Ocean Promise or even Ocean Problem. It took a long time before they could use our name correctly. Quite a few resorted to using our abbreviated name: "OP."

The story about the process of establishing this company is quite interesting. When Mr. Sato was groping in the dark, looking for a way to carry out the direction from True Father, some information came that a business named Showa Marine LV was looking for a buyer. Showa had no real problems; simply the owner wanted to focus on his headquarters branch in Los Angeles. This enabled the business to be acquired under ideal conditions. The existing employees' attitude was very critical in the new company's success. At first of course, the reality of being managed by a church, the UC in particular, was unsettling to most. Their anxiety was eliminated by the efforts and personality of our new manager, Mr. Matsuda.

Our new manager Matsuda was the block manager of the southeast division of TWF. He was designated by Chairman Furuta as a new type of leader for the CIG era. Currently he is influencing our company in many positive ways with his unique humble attitude. After I was resigned TWF, Steve was fired immediately. Since his negotiation skill was recognized, he was called to the new company. Just as with the TWF LV branch, he now works as a key player as hotel purchasing liaison, together with other duties like overseeing food safety.

My first task was promoting sales by visiting the old customers with whom we were on friendly terms at the time of TWF. I asked them to start business with Ocean Providence. Surprisingly enough, customers with whom I worked while at TWF did not overlap much with the customer base of the previous Showa. Through this combination of two companies varied customers, market share for the new company increased dramatically. Our next task was to improve quality.

Although Showa had a strong sales force, the product line was lacking in Japanese imports and Bluefin tuna. We needed to develop this area. Mr. Shimada, a TWF VP and block leader, had resigned soon after me. He returned to Japan and created a fish export company named Ocean Boy. He exported a full line of fresh Japanese fish to similar in quality to that of TWF. Immediately the product competitiveness of Ocean Providence improved dramatically. Mr. Shimada is not a UC member; he is a professional businessman who developed TWF according to the vision of Chairman Furuta and VP Sato. From a business point of view, he could not find hope in the new direction that TWF had taken. Therefore he resigned his position. Since then he has been actively supporting Ocean Providence.

Mr. Tsukada, who was the president of Ikko Int'l, under the umbrella of TWF, and Mr. Kikuchi, who was the TWF LA branch manager, were also dismissed from TWF. Using their experience and business networks, they could start an import business called Global Ocean LA. Mr. Takeda who resigned as manager of TWF SF, established Global Ocean SF. All of these developments made a stronger and stronger foundation for product availability benefiting the new Ocean Providence. We could finally access Bluefin tuna and specialty imports smoothly.

As we steadily expanded our sales volume, the older facility we inherited was becoming too spatially limited for our operation. We needed a new office somewhere. By some fortuitous design, Showa's owner had an unused property in Las Vegas that was perfect for our needs, both in size and location. In June 2013, we relocated and continued our growth. Delivery time and sales contacts both benefitted from our new location. We had been fortunate to gain such advantages due primarily to the effort, personal connections, and fortune of Mr. Sato.

It is said that for big things to be accomplished: "heavenly timing, geographical advantage, and harmony among people" is necessary. At the time of Foundation Day 2012, in a place that True Father had selected, and with the support and unity of many good people, Ocean Providence was able to achieve \$1.4 million in sales in just two years from its establishment. We became the company with the greatest market share for our product niche in Las Vegas. Whatever was needed for such a result somehow became available. A success like that seems impossible without heavenly help. Chairman Furuta called it a miracle and I really think it was fulfilled because of spiritual guidance.

There is one great disappointment, however. We were not able to report such success of the new Ocean Providence to True Father while he was on the earth. Still we are confident that True Father was kindly leading us and granting us heavenly fortune from the spirit world.

In our work there is no long lasting stability. As mentioned before, even after growing a successful company, if we are not meeting new challenges, we could be caught off guard. The goddess of victory will smile only for those who strive without letting their guard down and never give up. Even now, every day is a battle for the next goal.

True Parents wish is not for the establishment of a single company. It is a grand plan for the salvation of human beings. What is ocean providence in the first place? In True Father's words, "the future leaders of the world must understand how to keep and preserve the oceans. The time is coming when humankind will invest all its power, cultural identity, traditions, and natural resources into developing the riches and treasures that lie at the bottom of the sea.. However, the key point is who will be in a commanding position in the ocean areas to pursue that development. When I am faced with this problem, I ask myself, as the founder of the Unification Church and True Parent responsible for human history, what base of operations am I going to leave for the future of the UC? That base will not be in urban areas, but on the coast. I am doing things in coastal areas that no one else has even thought of doing...that is the reason I am alone on the ocean, training" (Cheon Seong Gyeong p. 1824). He taught us the hidden possibilities of the ocean and how important it is to the Unification Church.

You can find many descriptions about the Ocean Providence in True Father's autobiography, As a Peace Loving Global Citizen. In chapter 4, Our Future Lies with the Ocean p. 170, True Father says, "As I toured the world, no one knew that plans were being made to develop economic foundations on a worldwide scale. As the church grew and the number of missions increased, the amount of funds we needed to support these activities increased dramatically. We needed income. As I toured forty eight states of the United States, I gave much thought to the kinds of business that could support the activities we had planned...The ocean is a treasure trove that guarantees humankind a bright future. That is why I teach that those who are concerned with the future of humanity must be concerned with the oceans. When we can love and inherit the oceans, we inherit the future. Within a short time we had made a major impact on the US fishing industry...the ocean has been such a wonderful teacher for me in my life."

True Father had established the seafood business to support church activities such as missionary work. His autobiography also talks about how he pioneered tuna fishing with the New Hope boat, created a sales network, built a processing plant, opened restaurants, and developed the fish business nationwide. He also created Ocean Challenge to train the youth of the world at sea, and furthermore built Ocean Church.

In chapter 7 Master of the Seas and the Future of the World p. 301, "If Korea wants to be the leader of this era, then Korea must make the necessary preparation. We must prepare for this contingency in two ways...with a philosophy and a heart that create oneness. Korea must plant a philosophy of oneness in the world...the second thing we must do is prepare ourselves for the new oceanic era. The Pacific era is at hand. Anyone who cannot rule the ocean cannot become a leader in the Pacific age. If heavenly fortune comes and we are not prepared, we cannot take advantage of the opportunity. There are more resources than fish in the ocean. A greater treasure is its ability to provide energy...that day is at hand when humanity will find itself dependent on the ocean... the country that conquers the oceans will become a dominant power in the world and find the world eager to study its culture and language. As such, he spoke about the importance of the ocean providence and Korea's Yeosu project as its preparation.

In another section, Solution to Poverty and Hunger p. 315, True Father spoke about the solution for hunger and food productivity. "The issue of food will present humankind with a very serious crisis in the future. The oceans contain limitless food supplies, and the best method for saving humanity from starvation is fish farming...this is the reason I have been pioneering the oceans for the past several decades. If we don't solve the food problem, we cannot build an ideal peaceful world." He spoke about such topics as fish storage, and building a processing plant which could manufacture fish powder. "Fish powder is 98% protein, among the very highest protein content of any food. For this reason, it could be used to save people from dying of hunger...Rwanda, Albania, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, in all these places fish powder could help the people facing starvation ...we're going to build fish processing plants in more places." He says that the real key to save humanity from starvation is fish farming.

In the section More Than Giving Bread, Teaching How to Make Bread p. 320, True Father said, "to solve the problem of hunger we must have a heart that is willing to plant seeds...it is as important to teach the skills needed to become self-sufficient in food production as it is to distribute food directly to those in need...I created New Hope Farms in Brazil's Jardim region as a model to show how humanity can live together in peace...the Paraguay River is deep and wide like the ocean . I have sailed a boat to fish in the river. Year by year, though, the people of Chaco who previously had no job and faced hunger, began to fish and begin a new livelihood. We have built a refrigerated plant near the river, due to so much spoilage of the catch. We could build a fish powder processing plant too. The people who are afraid of fishing on the boat are working in sales and in the storage facility. They no longer suffer from hunger or despair

about their life. Resolving the food situation does not mean that peace will follow immediately however. After the hunger issue has been resolved, it is important to carry out educational programs on peace and love. I have built many schools in places such as Jardim and Chaco...we worked hard to convince them that their youth needed good education. As a result, we now have many students. We built a light industrial factory where they could produce items using simple technologies, and the students became more interested in attending school in order to work in the factory. We are responsible for the people around the world who die of hunger. We need to take action to help them. We need to feel a clear sense of responsibility and find a way that they can be fed and saved. People who live well should come down to a slightly lower position and raise up those who live poorly, to bring about a world where all people live well."

In this way, True Father made a proclamation of victory or the oceanic providence centering on South America, and proclaim the beginning of the Pacific Rim Era in November 2000. I think the model of the world mission lies here. By church and business entities becoming one, in the same manner that mind and body become one, the re-creation of the universe is realized. In this way, the ocean providence is an important project for the salvation of mankind, and is a necessary providence in building Cheon Il Guk.

I've been told that the ocean providence started with the launching ceremony of the boat named Heavenly Victory on June 5th, 1963. At that time, True Father explained that, "Heavenly Victory means that heaven is to win. It is to achieve the will of God...in order to make a criterion that heaven has won, we have built ships until now, and I declared: "let us subjugate the seas of the world." Based on this Heavenly Victory boat and the 124 couples blessing on July 24th, the Day of All Things was established on July 26th, and the battle for restoring ownership over all things began. Like this, True Father's providence of restoration was always with the ocean providence. Herein might lay the reason that True Father gave directions to start the new ocean providence in Las Vegas, the final providential battleground.



Currently in Las Vegas, centering on Kwon Jin Nim, a UEF project is welcoming first ladies and leaders of African nations. Here they receive the words and the vision of True Parents. Listening to my friend Mrs. Harasaki, who works on the project, reminded me of how poor some African countries are, and lacking in vital industries. They have oceans but do not know well how to fish. If we had more power and foundation, we could build something like Jardim's New Hope Farm, which would serve as a model. It would bring so much hope, and improve missionary work there.

I read from a source that Mauritania had become independent from France in 1960, but there was no industry to support the country. Many people were suffering from hunger and poverty. A Japanese man named Masaaki Nakamura came and taught them how to fish for octopus. The locals, who prior to his arrival did not know octopus fishing methods, increased their catches, and soon established a viable fishing industry. The Mauritania fish industry eventually developed to the point where 86% of their catch was octopus. Even now, a high volume of octopus eaten in Japan is imported from this West African country. Life for the locals became richer with the birth of this industry. The people are sincerely grateful for that foreign pioneer and having Japan as a trading partner. Isn't this exactly what True Father wanted to achieve?

If we had had this kind of power and capability, the world mission may have advanced much farther by now. Originally Foundation Day needed one single country where God's sovereignty could be built. Even now, young BCs from Japan who have formed Cheon Il Guk missionary team are out in the world struggling to restore this one country to fulfill the will of True Parents. I think it would be great if there was the foundation of ocean providence to back up this mission.

TWG, which True Father had built up by pouring out his heart and soul, continued to expand a variety of marine leisure and marine product industries. With TWF as the kernel, companies such as IOE, Shining Ocean, ISA, and True World Marine came into existence. It was also as time when we could build a worldwide foundation by establishing branches in Europe and China. This TWG was meant to be the core of the ocean providence. It was the base to support the challenges, hopes, and dreams that True Parents had for the ocean.

Even now, members of TWG who understand the will of True Parents are waiting with longing hearts for the day when the business can be returned to the original owner. It is similar to Romans 8:19: "eagerly longing for the creation." The reason TWG had deviated from the direction of True Parents desire was the outcome of just a few leaders who were ignorant of the providence. As far as I know, most employees are very faithful, and many spouses are part of the society of proud blessed families who support Kodan activities.

When the UCI problem had occurred, there were those who left TWF and those who remained. A senior member told me a story from the movie The Last Ronin. In that movie there was a saying "there is a greater burden on the shoulders of those who remain than those who went out to fight and die" the story is similar to our situation. The last Ronin lived to treasure what the lord had left, even while receiving misjudgment and misunderstanding. My earnest wish is that someday TWG can come back under True Parents, enabling TWG and Ocean Providence to work together as brothers.

In March 2014, True Mother suddenly called Chairman Furuta from Japan to have a talk about the Peace Palace being built in Las Vegas. Chairman Furuta reported to True Mother that he wanted to ask Continental Director Bishop Kim to lead the opening ceremony for our newly opened Ocean Providence business in Las Vegas. Surprisingly she decided that she herself would conduct this opening ceremony. There was no precedent for True Mother herself to attend an opening ceremony for a relatively small local business, and it felt like a miracle. Until 4 PM on the day of the ceremony, everyone worked as in a state of war. All preparations including flowers, decorations, a cake, seating, curtains, gifts, banners, and ribbon cutting were feverishly made in a short time. Everyone was truly united under manager Matsuda and we were able to welcome True Mother and Kwon Jin Nim's couple to a successful ceremony.



During the ceremony, True Mother gave words of gratitude to those who worked for the ocean providence with sincere hearts, and deeply thanked Chariman Furuta for attending from Japan. She shared how True Father was sincerely concerned about world hunger and environmental issues which undermine God's creation; she said that as part of a solution to these problems, True Father had established a number of marine related businesses, and that tons of fish protein powder was sent to feed people in Africa.

On this day, about forty local members of the Las Vegas church community attended. Many of them gave testimony about how True Father was in their presence spiritually. The ceremony finished successfully, providing an occasion to appreciate True Parents love.



While attending, I recalled the days of working in Las Vegas until that moment. My heart welled up with feelings. Looking back on it, I compare how Steve and I came to Las Vegas during the TWF period to how the two spies sneaked into Jericho Castle. I am grateful we could even slightly be able to contribute to the construction of an important front line called ocean providence.

This year Ocean Providence has added branches in New York, Minneapolis and Columbus. Although this is my own testimony, I think that each and every staff member who was involved in the construction of Ocean Providence has their own personal story to tell about facing difficulties on walking this path.

I have learned many things from the faithful attitude of Chairman Furuta, who worked with absolute faith in order to achieve the mission to start the new ocean providence.

Finally, I truly believed that the reason I was able to concentrate on my work during my long period in Las Vegas away from my family was because I had my wife's support. She worked so hard to support me, saying, "If I fail, you'd really be in trouble, right?" So I conclude this testimony with my deepest gratitude to my wife.

Postscript:

It has been five years since I came to Las Vegas. I wrote this note as a reference point in my life. During the past five years, a wide variety of things happened, for the church and also for me. It was a tumultuous period. During this time, it caused me to deeply reflect on the term "zero point". In order to return to God in the course of restoration, we must go the road of denial: the zero point. Just like how we cannot jump from mountain to mountain if we want to climb a higher peak, we must go down to the valley and start climbing from the zero point. Whenever we hit a brick wall that we cannot overcome by our old faith, past experiences, past abilities, we need to go through some suffering to allow rebirth to occur. Whether we like it or not, this trial will come to us if we walk a path of faith. True Children, who have a great mission and responsibility, also have fought these kinds of trials. How to overcome this zero point is the question. The road will be different depending on whether we choose to overcome it by faith or by running away with a humanistic way of thinking. I, myself, was sent to Las Vegas and forced to stand on the zero point. As it is written "do not make light of the Lord's discipline: Hebrews 12:3 Heavenly Parents discipline us to make our faith strong, just as metal is refined in fire Isaiah.

When I began writing this testimony, my eldest son Eisei told me an interesting dream he had recently. He was in a large stadium with filled many church members. A huge wave like a "Tsunami" struck and washed away many people and things. He naturally panicked, but just then True Parents appeared and said "Don't worry, just follow us". I thought it was very deep meaning dream.

Writing this report gave me the opportunity to study more True Fathers words about the ocean providence as well as his autobiography. I was able to find and re-learn True Fathers words, which I feel are necessary for me right now. Among them are the Alaskan spirit of never going back until fulfilling ones responsibility; also the Pantanal spirit of swallowing both good things and bad things as they are, and then expanding yourself as you influence others around you; until now, I had the feeling that I had known about ocean providence enough, but as I wrote this it made me understand more deeply about True Parents work of the restoration of humanity.



Las Vegas is currently working to realize the vision of True Parents through projects such as the Peace Palace. I hope this testimony can be of help in gaining interest in Las Vegas even slightly.

And lastly, I would like to thank our beloved brother, Matt Ishizuka, who wrote this English translation more expressively than the original Japanese text.

Thank you