

Our Alaska Experience - Lessons learned from Jim Avey

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On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Unification Movement in Alaska



I did not imagine my life journey would be from Texas through the East Coast to Alaska. Especially because I did not particularly like cold weather or snow or ice! Jim Avey (who is now deceased and ascended Jan 6, 2021) was the epitome of Alaska for me. From the time of my engagement to Jim in May 1979, I started getting to know Alaska.

Jim first settled in Anchorage as a child around 1952 with his family. Jim and I came to Alaska to Jim's beloved hometown with Jaedon and Jaena (son and daughter) in 1989.

My late husband Jim would say, "Do not let external things like bad weather conditions control you. That is, once you know what you must do, pursue it determinedly - to survive and to make it to the planned destination. Like the spirit of the salmon that swims upstream to spawn or the Iditarod mushers and their dog teams - that endure all forms of hardships to get their teams through the finish line in Nome. Keep going."

Jim had a life-and-death understanding of authenticity and a sincere honesty. In villages you must rely on each other. You need to be open and aware of each other. You need to think of others' needs or someone may die.

Jim often told the story of the time that he went on an outdoors winter adventure, and someone wore cotton socks. Not a good idea, but the person wasn't listening.

Cotton clothing does not wick properly. Moisture cumulation on the body can lead to hypothermia and/or frostbite. Although informed about this, one of the women in the group did not take that rule seriously and wore cotton clothing items. She did not speak up about needing other safer wool or thermal synthetics.

Her feet started freezing, giving her hypothermia. The pre-frostbite made it difficult for her to hike. She

had to be carried by makeshift stretcher, which slowed everyone down. Due to her error in judgment everyone could have been in danger.

Lessons from Jim: ALASKA

A Alaskans are seriously authentic, alert and aware of the environment, and uncompromising in their concern for the whole - team, family and/or village - as well as the individual.

L Jim taught me that loving your neighbor and living for others was to have a welcoming spirit. Does anyone remember his Wishing Well Coffee stand, "Wishing you well every day" on the sidewalk in front of 521 N Street for about six summers? At bush cabins you leave the door open for all passers-by who might need the hospitality of the shelter and any pantry for their well-being.

A Alaskans know accurate information tested by the intuitive gut keeps them alive and helps them be aware of dangers around them. They watch each other's backs regarding safety. A = Accuracy counts.

S Survival means sharing what you have with others. Families and villagers hunt and fish for each other as well as themselves. Selfishness does not bring prosperity and can be life threatening. Survival and sustainability are community ethics and efforts in Alaska and this Unification Movement.

K Kindness expressed as small-town helpfulness for your neighbors, friends or even the stranger in need is what brings a spirit of "we are all one family ...under one God."

A Lastly, and maybe most importantly, the creation is awesome and awe inspiring. The outdoors in Alaska is awesome! I remember hearing Reverend Moon say that all Alaska is a holy ground to experience God the Heavenly Parent and Creator more deeply through the creation. Particularly Father Moon and Mother Moon loved their experiences with cabin sharing with Alaskans in small "bush" communities. When we are recognized for our authentic, original selves by other authentic people, such as our true fellow Alaskans, we are building the Kingdom of Heaven.

There is external cold in Alaska, but the heart of this culture resonates with the warmth of the Founders of this Unification Movement, centering on the True Love of God.

In our family's 34 years in Alaska, we experienced this ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth from our home outward.

Those of you here, I love you even if we haven't known each other before. We love all those who worked with our families to build more unity within Christianity - the Body of Christ - and all faithful believers of all religions. We who have shared a vision for Alaska as an integral part of a Peace Road and Peace Culture, have heard and sought to embrace the guidance and leadership of the founders of this Unification Movement known as True Parents, as anointed by God and appointed by Jesus Christ.

I love my family - parents, siblings, spouse, children and grandchildren, and my extended family of this Movement, especially True Parents for living this vision and sharing the blessing of it with me. Thank you!

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