

## 43 Kodiak Missionaries Reunite at Ocean Summit West at the IPEC in Las Vegas

Michael Balcomb  
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This weekend the International Peace and Education Center (IPEC) in Las Vegas played host to a highly successful and emotionally charged reunion bringing together many of the 43 Japanese Unificationist missionaries who worked in Kodiak, Alaska from 1984 to 1989 to lay the foundations of True Parents' international oceanic work around the world. For many of the missionaries, who came from all over the United States and from as far away as England, Canada, Korea, New Zealand and Japan, it was the first time to meet together in over 27 years. All weekend long they shared tears of joy, laughter, as well as sorrow and longing for those who could not make it—especially those who have already ascended to the spirit world.



*Hwa Yeon Moon offers gifts and greetings to the Ocean Summit 2017 attendees.*

The story of these special missionaries is not as well-known as it should be. In the fall of 1983, True

Father was concluding his annual visit to Kodiak, Alaska. Although the salmon and halibut season that year had been spectacular, there was yet one cloud on an otherwise sunny horizon: International Seafoods of Alaska, a business that True Father hoped would become not only a leading seafood distributor but also develop new technologies to solve world hunger, was not doing well. Concerned, True Father asked the management, “How can I help you succeed?” and was told in reply, “Please send us fifty dedicated workers from Japan!”



“In fact, the management were thinking they needed 50 tough Japanese men, preferably with a background in fishing, but True Father sent instead 50 young Japanese women, most of whom had no experience whatsoever,” said Keiko King, one of the 43 who now lives in Nova Scotia, Canada. “They were absolutely shocked when they saw us!” Before long, however, these young women had impressed everyone in the company and throughout the town of Kodiak with their dedication, hard work, faith, commitment, and above all, love for God and True Parents.



*A receipt of the 43 sisters' record-breaking result, signed by True Father.*

“It wasn’t easy for our families, especially our husbands,” said Sachiko Grange who flew up to the



reunion from Chile with her husband Ross. “We had all attended the 1982 Marriage Blessing Ceremonies in New York or Seoul, and after a few years in Alaska, we were beginning to wonder when, if ever, we would be able to join our spouses and begin family life! But we all felt an absolute commitment to the mission, and vowed to each other we would remain until True Father told us it was time to go.”

That day finally came at the end of the summer of 1989. On August 31, True Parents declared an important milestone in their providential work, the Pal Cheon Shik or “settlement of eight stages,” that indicated that the burden of past failures and mistakes had been lifted and a new age could begin. Although the ceremony was originally scheduled for Korea, True Father decided to hold it in Kodiak as a testament to the faith and sacrifice of this precious group of missionaries. Immediately afterward, he sent them out as missionaries, now joined with their husbands, to develop the ocean providence in countries around the world.



*Dr. Ki Hoon Kim explains the story behind True Mother's signature and shares her message of blessing.*

The idea of a reunion came to Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) Continental Director of North America, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, during a visit to Kodiak last summer for the National Ocean Challenge fishing competition, and during the past five months plans were developed in partnership with Kodan, our national Japanese ministry. When True Mother invited the United States leadership team to Korea earlier this month to ring in the New Year, Dr. Kim took the chance to invite her to sign commemorative photographs as a gift to the 43 sisters. As she did so, she remarked “Please thank them for their efforts, and tell them that they are no longer Ocean Missionaries but Ocean Messiahs!”



The reunion was part of the 4th Annual Ocean Summit West, a conference that brings together all the different stakeholders in related activities, such as Ocean Church, the Peace King Fishing Tournament, as well as various ocean and fish related business efforts. The conference was ably directed by Rev. Clint Woods, who with his wife Astrid serves as Montana State Pastor, and Mrs. Naria Gaarder, who with her husband Branch is bringing a new and youthful focus to the ocean program.



*Clint Woods, Ocean Summit director and Montana Family Church pastor.*

After hearing many moving testimonies, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, FFWPU USA President Dr. Michael Balcomb, Kodan Director Rev. Hiroshi Inose, and others hosted a special awards banquet, presenting gifts to each of the newly-minted “Ocean Messiahs” and sharing songs and entertainment.



“Your sacrifice and effort means so much,” said Dr. Kim, “and is one of the main reasons that True Father was called the ‘King of the Ocean’ and also why today, our ocean fishing businesses in Alaska are doing so well. God is blessing us because of you!”

Indeed, the spirit and love of True Parents flowed freely and powerfully all weekend and we all look forward to the next reunion, and to the development of True Parents' ocean work to ever greater levels of success.

#### OCEAN SUMMIT WEST TESTIMONIES

*"In today's ceremony we received diplomas and True Mother's signatures for us. It is such a wonderful honor. We don't know how to return this blessing. After we come back home, we will really do our best to expand this true love to our neighbors and our community."* —**Masako Whitmore**

*"These 43 Japanese missionaries worked so hard and offered so much sacrifice to support our True Parents in Kodiak for many years. We just finished hearing testimonies from four of the sisters that really captured the heart of their investment there. We shared laughs and we shared many tears as we thought about the hard work and sacrifices that they made in order to really live up to the big goals that True Parents had given them."* —**Susan Bouachri**

*"As a second-generation Unificationist I felt very involved [in the 2017 Ocean Summit]. I felt that I learned so much and there is so much opportunity for young Unificationists here. We need more second generation involvement; there is so much opportunity to connect with nature, to go fishing, to be involved with the fishing industry and the ocean industry, and to care about our future and really take ownership of that. I want to encourage everyone around the world to come to Kodiak, Alaska and participate in Ocean Challenge. There's a great future ahead of us for those who want to get involved."* —**Tong Guerra**