

Golden Age Newsletter April 2024

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
April 7, 2024



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Hello Goldies, Welcome to the new look! It's all the same content with a simpler format. We hope you enjoy!

Read about Your Story by the Spurgins, testimony by Bruce Burns, New Zealand Ocean Fishing, and an uptake of Kid's Puppetry.

Your Story

by Hugh and Nora Spurgin



Photo credit: Nora Spurgin

Everyone has a story. Unificationists have amazing stories that are laced with more travels and experiences than most people have had. Before we leave this planet Earth it is good to write them down and leave a legacy for descendants and for history.

Several years ago, Dr. Chung Sik Yong said to Hugh, "True Mother would like you to

write your memoirs as a testimony to True Parents.” We felt inspired to do so! Both of us have published our stories: Nora’s is *Spiritual Connections: Living in the Flow of God’s Love*; Hugh’s is *Passion and Grit: A Spiritual Odyssey*. It requires a great deal of work. It took us three years to write and publish both of our stories. We were also inspired by Farley and Betsy Jones who each wrote very moving memoirs. These autobiographies and memoirs are available on Amazon and on the FFWPU website through the new member’s bookshelf. These memoirs are examples of autobiographies written by Unificationists.

Currently we live in a gated, senior community in Florida consisting of 2,100 homes. There are many clubs – one of which is a Writers Club that is led by a Methodist minister who has written 17 novels. In our club, we share our stories as we are in the process of writing them down. The club members encouraged us along the way.

We want to encourage each of you to write – whether it is an essay on lessons from your life, a small pamphlet for your children, or a full-fledged book. Whether published or not, it is your story to tell, and it is important to record it for posterity!

The hardest part of the process is to get started. Our mentor in the Writers Club instructed us to, “Just start writing. Don’t think. Don’t worry about it being perfect. Afterward you can go back and tweak it.” We found that to be true. Once you start writing, your thoughts will begin to flow, leading you on and on. Skip the details that you later will need to add. You can go back and fill them in later.

You might want to make a list of ideas and stories that you would like to cover. Then begin writing about them one by one. That is what Nora did, which became her memoir. Another way to start is to do a chronology of your life events, then start writing about each of them. That is what Hugh did, which resulted in his autobiography.

We have also found that our books have been a wonderful way to share our lives of faith with friends and acquaintances. Many of our friends in our local community have read our books. We also have put them in our community library. At this point in our lives, telling our stories has been a “mission” that works well for us and is comfortable for our neighbors and friends to open up discussions. For example, recently we had a barbeque with three couples in our community. All of them had read Nora’s book. Someone said, “You were married in a Moonie wedding. That is fascinating.” Many of Hugh’s golfing friends have read our memoirs, and all of them have reacted positively to them. Our books have served as a John-the-Baptist to our True Parents and to their memoirs.

We hope this essay will encourage you to write your own unique story. Someday people will want to know more about the early followers who gave up every worldly thing to follow God’s representatives, our True Parents, and seek to build the Kingdom of Heaven of Earth, like the disciples of Jesus did.

In a culture that seems to be losing its bearings on the most basic issues—and a world that grows more dangerous, take time to read *Passion and Grit*. You'll learn how to ask the deeper questions about the meaning of life, to live for a higher purpose, to find real and true family love—and especially how to make a difference using your unique strengths and talents.

— Thomas P. McDevitt, *Chairman, The Washington Times*

A source of inspiration that reads like the book of Acts. It is the story of a disciple, a pioneer, a builder, manager and administrator—who lives a real and full life with faith filled with passionate vision to realize goals that many consider impossible. Dr. Spurgin's story is living evidence that with God nothing is impossible.

— Franco Famularo, D.Min.
President, Universal Peace Federation, Canada
Chair, Board of Trustees, Unification Theological Seminary

Reacting on a time when new religious movements were rampant, *Passion and Grit* sheds light on the heart's hunger for love, spirituality, and purpose, making it relevant for all time, including today. It is an insightful read that documents an extraordinary effort to bring about dramatic changes in a world in turmoil.

A life-changing decision made by Hugh Spurgin as a young adult changed the trajectory of his life, resulting in remarkable experiences and opportunities. Through the lens of an early and loyal follower of the charismatic religious leader, Rev. Moon from Korea, religious and political events are viewed as steps toward the ultimate goal of ushering in a peaceful kingdom of heaven on earth.

The author takes the reader on his worldwide travels as a leader in the launching of several peace organizations. Educated in American history and public administration, Dr. Spurgin reminisces about the challenges and rewards of organizing professional seminars and conferences in many different nations and cultures.

Readers will view the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification from the inside, as it took root in America when young adults were seeking a deeper understanding of God and the meaning of life.

\$15.95
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PASSION AND GRIT

PASSION AND GRIT

A SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY

HUGH SPURGIN

SPURGIN

"Nora recounts a happy childhood growing up on a Mennonite family farm in Pennsylvania to speaking at global conferences about God, love, peace and women's leadership around the world, she has led an extraordinary life of faith and substance. Her delightful memoir reveals the wealth of challenges and achievements she encountered after hearing the teachings of Rev. Sun Myung Moon in the 1960s. This wise woman is known as a "super" connector to thousands of people, as well as an accomplished educator, counselor, social worker and author and devoted wife, mother and grandmother. I highly recommend her memoir to anyone searching for greater meaning in life."

— Thomas P. McDevitt, *Chairman, The Washington Times*



IN THIS MEMOIR, Nora takes you through a life rich in human relationships in a series of unlikely events linked by the flow of God's underlying love and energy. Through a coup in the Soviet Union, a trip to North Korea, a friendship with a well-respected Syrian Bible translator, and visits with missionaries in Oceania and South East Asia, her spiritual journey is spell binding.

As president of Womens Federation for World Peace USA, Nora was instrumental in creating the deeply moving Bridge of Peace Ceremonies where first ladies, presidents, prime ministers, entertainers and celebrities crossed a bridge of peace, uniting "sisters" of diverse nationalities and cultures in bonds of friendship. Many thousands of Japanese and American women found their hearts healed from the scars of World War II. This ceremony became a signature event that women still use in peace-making efforts throughout the world.

Nora passes on a legacy of life's lessons learned through a broad range of experiences as a leader and trend-setter with an ever expanding understanding of God's presence and love for humanity. Her story demonstrates how what seems to be a series of random events and human relationships are connected. Through her personal experiences, you may find your own life revealed in a new light.

Circles of Angels Publications
 Memoir / Women and Spirituality
 US \$15.95



SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

LIVING IN THE FLOW OF GOD'S LOVE

NORA MARTIN SPURGIN

SPURGIN

History Bytes



Photo credit: Bruce Burns

I am the Richest Man in the World - My Tribute to God

By Bruce Burns (and his Yoko)

Throughout high school I would be considered close to a “perfect” kid - I loved sports, had good friends, none of us smoked or did drugs. By the time I graduated high school, some drank alcohol but not me. My life was idyllic.

College, however, would be quite different.

Read more [\[MAKE THIS A LIVE LINK\]](#)

Culture & Art



Photo credit: Barry Geller



Photo by Barry Geller



Photo by Barry Geller

Fishing and More in New Zealand

by Barry Geller

March 6 to March 15

New Zealanders are known as the Kiwi country because the unusual, nocturnal, wingless Kiwi is the national bird. Learning the culture and traditions of New Zealand was one reason we came, but the main reason for our trip was to compete in the 2024 Fishing World Cup tournament, occurring once every four years. The tournament, founded by Father and Mother Moon, was a great success. 15 teams from many parts of the world joined. There were 71 participants. Participants came from as far as Finland, Uruguay, USA, Korea, Japan, Fiji, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Estonia, Scotland, Kazakhstan, Brazil and the Cook Islands.

Read more [\[MAKE THIS A LIVE LINK\]](#)

A Friend of Mine Once Told Me Jokingly

By Carol Pobanz

A friend of mine once told me jokingly, “If you’re Italian you don’t read the directions, you just look at the pictures.” Well, my ancestry is Italian. I really don’t know if that statement is true in general; however, it is true for me. My mom, who only went to the 4th grade never read the directions either, but she could make anything from nothing, and my dad, who made it to the 8th grade, always improved on the directions – he taught me to lay out a dress pattern the best way using half the amount of material the pattern called for. My parents were just practical people with common sense, which I believe I inherited and which I hope to impart to my grandchildren.

A couple of weeks ago my grandson, Charlie and I were looking online for puppets. I’ve always loved puppets, and puppet making. We saw a green bird marionette.

“I can do that,” I told him. Then, together, Charlie and I made a marionette. Marjorie Buessing suggested I share the directions with other grandparents but, like I said, “I don’t follow directions.” So, let me just share what we did – pictures included.

We bought these items:

- an 8” half sphere of Styrofoam
- 4” Styrofoam sphere
- a skein of cheap $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ ” thick yarn
- a bottle of Tacky glue (fast drying glue)
- a ball of thin string
- 2 slats of wood
- Floral wire

Step 1. For the body – make a hole at the top of the large half–sphere. Fill the hole with glue and push the yard into the hole to secure it. Then begin to coil the yarn around itself. Best for gramma to control the glue while the child begins wrapping the coils. When the topside is dry, continue to coil on the bottom or flat side until the half–sphere is completely covered with yarn.

Step 2. For the head – Cut the 4” sphere in half and then cut one of the halves again, making 2 quarters that will be used for the feet. The pieces should also be covered with yarn, the same as for the body.

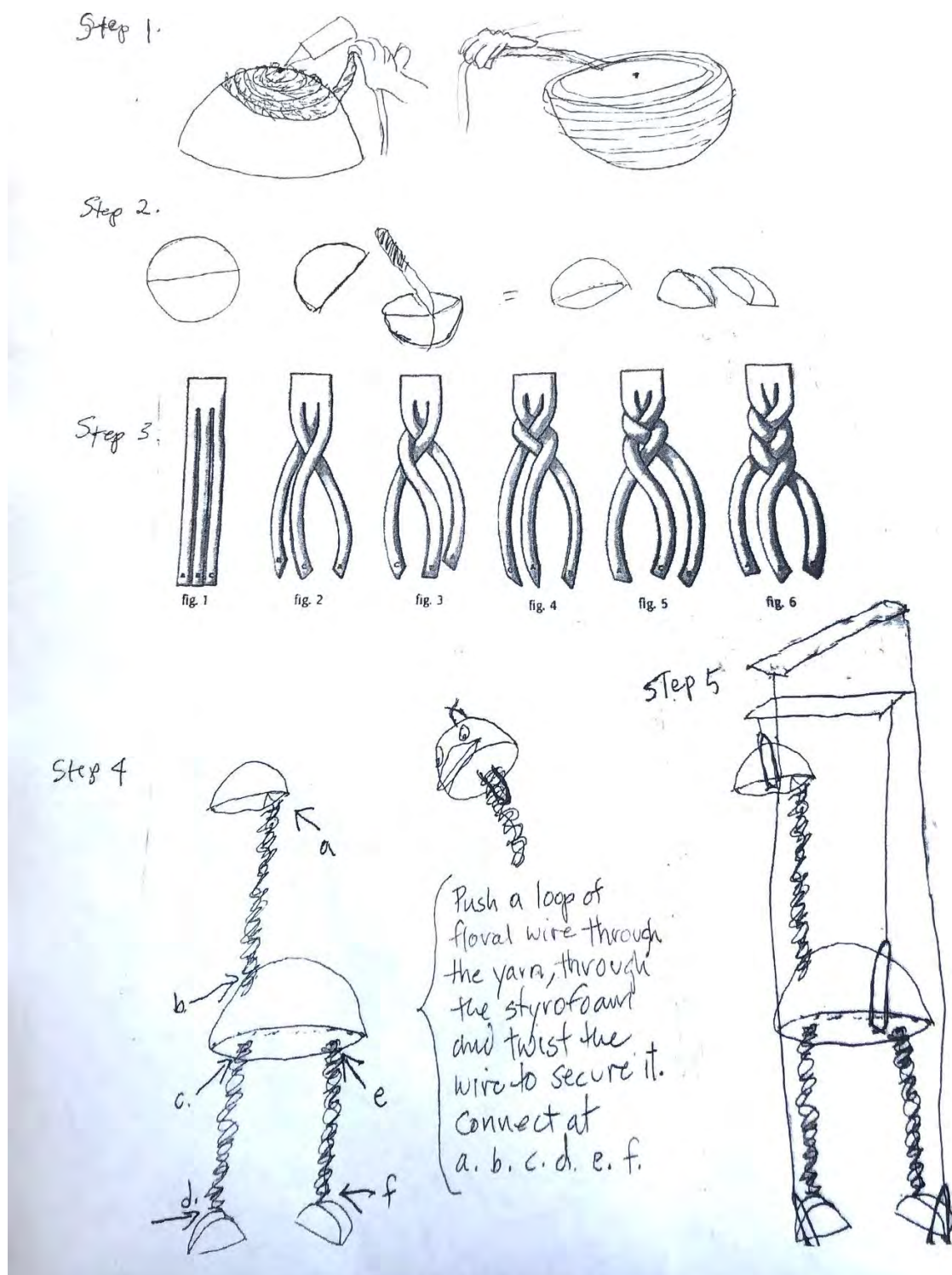
Step 3. For the neck and legs – braid three 12” strands of yarn for the neck, and two 10” braids for the legs.

Step 4. Now for the tricky part – connecting it all. I tried a couple of different things, i.e., glue with staples and eye screws, but nothing held well to the Styrofoam. Finally, I used thin floral wire – running a folded wire through the material I was trying to connect then through the Styrofoam securing it with a twist on the other side. (Glue face features to the head. I made the beak with construction paper, and I used stick–on eyes.)

Step 5. Connect the strings – Push a loop of floral wire through the Styrofoam, this time in 4 locations, twisting it in the back to secure it. Leave a bit of wire on the top to connect the strings. Then connect the other end of the string to the ends of the stick. Connect the 2 leg strings to each end of one stick and connect the head and back strings to each end of the other stick.

Now turn on the music and make it dance!





Kindly click here to see simple videos:

[coiling.mov - Google Drive](#)

[Dancing Bird.mov - Google Drive](#)

Bulletin Board

The Golden Age newsletter was created two years ago but has just moved to a new location. The newsletter was created as a means to keep our elder community connected to one another. Articles include a message of hope and inspiration, Unification Thoughts on the 5th Realm of heart (grandparenting), testimonies and shared memories, stories about: talents, hobbies and interests used for God and, a few ideas regarding health and recipes.

To subscribe please click *here*.

If you would like to contribute an article, please contact Carol Pobanz at carolpobanz@gmail.com.

This newsletter is being made available to all members in the Unification Movement regardless of their group affiliation. Please share with all senior brothers and sisters (age 60 and over).

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My Tribute to God

I AM THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD - MY TRIBUTE TO GOD

By Bruce Burns (and his Yoko)

Throughout high school I would be considered close to a "perfect" kid - I loved sports, had good friends, none of us smoked or did drugs. By the time I graduated high school, some drank alcohol but not me. My life was idyllic.

College, however, would be quite different. Going away to college meant starting anew with no friends. Under those circumstances, I did something I had not done before - I made friends with a cigarette smoker, only to find out a few weeks later that he also smoked marijuana. I became disheartened for three days, and then let down my guard. Then my college education really got started - I majored in partying and learning about marijuana for the next three months. But I did not smoke. I was struggling with myself until Christmas vacation. At home I questioned my friends and family about what they thought about marijuana.

When I returned to college after Christmas break, one of the guys jokingly asked me if I wanted to get high, and out of my mouth came the answer, "Yes." I got high and I loved it! My group of friends and I were always adventurous and did wild things when we got high. We worshiped the "marijuana god" morning, noon and night. I had a great time through the end of the semester. But that summer the "bottom fell out of my life". I didn't know any more who I was, what I was or where I was. I was totally lost - I, who never really felt a day of depression in my entire life. That was the beginning of my five and a half years in hell. I lived in that hell trying to find my way back to my old self. I was still smoking marijuana sometimes (no longer religiously). Then, on March 25, 1975 I made a determination to quit for a year. I did it! And on (April 10, 1976) I started up again. Starting up again in some way was a good thing because it led me to quit school which I was probably not meant for in the first place.

I joined the Army

I joined the Army for one purpose. I thought that would help me get away from drugs. That, however, was a mistaken thought. I began my assignment in Hawaii, and I immediately had any kind of drug I wanted to buy available to me, and I started a very successful "medical business". I feel very repentant now. As I say that, I also sold cocaine which I know men were shooting up. I never used cocaine but I know I was an A**-hole for selling it and I asked God's forgiveness again and again.

I was in the Army for one year - I never got caught with the drugs. I was a runner for the battalion. I always kept up my running. I received a General Discharge from the Army under honorable conditions.

Even though I ran the Boston Marathon in April 1977 in 3 hours and 25 minutes, my head and my heart were still messed up. My depression continued. I worked the winter of 1978-79 outside in New Jersey and I swore I would never do it again. Too cold. I made a decision then to go back to Hawaii to drive a pedicab and become a "street pharmacist" (drug dealer) - Fun in the Sun!

After my Army discharge, I had spent three weeks in San Francisco and I really liked it, especially Chinatown. So, before leaving for Hawaii again, I returned to San Francisco intending to leave before December 7th, Before Pearl Harbor Day ("Slap a Jap Day" as some of my Army pals called it), I also wanted to watch the Honolulu Marathon.

As I was walking down the street in San Francisco, a guy asked me for the time. I showed him my watchless wrist and we started talking. I considered him quite cool because he had done a lot more hitchhiking than I, and in more exotic places like Iran and India. This was Raymond Presky - I consider him the key to my salvation. I am so grateful that he was bold enough to talk to me - a very hairy guy with a minimal amount of face showing. He told me about a free dinner that I was definitely interested in but I needed a little more encouragement to go. Linda Sharpe (now Linda Lyndstrom) showed up as we rounded the corner. She gave me a piece of paper with the address 1153 Bush St. I needed that because I would never have remembered the address and thus there would be no free dinner.

Kristina (Morrison) Sayer gave the talk that night, which I'm sure was great, but my head was too foggy to remember it. One thing that did interest me though was a film depicting these people loading up planes for two countries - probably "Project Volunteer". I thought, "Oh, these people are doing something good." At the end of the evening, they invited me and the other guests to their farm. I'm a hitch-hiker so I like to see where a road will take me. I was interested in going, but they were asking me for \$20. I knew I had \$10 in cash in one pocket and in the other pocket somewhere between \$300 to \$600 in travelers checks. So, I told a technical lie when I said I only had \$10, but I was only planning to stay one day anyway. Well, the way things turned out, that was the best little lie I ever told, and it ended up saving my life.

In the morning on the farm, Joshua Cotter woke us up with beautiful guitar music "The Red, Red Robin." After the first day, I caught up with one of the sisters and told her, "I think I should leave." And she said, "I think you should stay," I said, "OK", and that is the closest I ever came to leaving my beautiful church.

I was really enjoying the lectures and my head was becoming less foggy. After about a week we got in a line outside to meet with the very smiling lady, Victoria. She asked, "Do you have your \$50 for the next week?" I very easily said, "No, I have no money." I was allowed to stay, and I continued listening and learning throughout the next week, until the line-up again when the smiling Victoria asked again, "Do you have your \$50 for next week?" I kind of growled, "No" because my conscience was beginning to bother me as it was coming back to life. Thank God, and thank True Parents, the power of the Divine Principle and Raymond Preskey.

It was around the second or third week, while I was listening to Noah Ross's lecture, that I started to feel spiritually attacked. The words I was hearing were "you are no good," and "you are a liar." Then I heard the words of my mother repeated to me, "Do the thing you fear the most and the death of your fear is certain," which also coincided with one of the Camp K mottos – "Do the hardest thing." These voices were so intense, so loud and pushy that I couldn't even hear the lectures anymore. I was in a daze. Then, immediately after the lecture, we went to eat and share. Jennifer was leading the dinner discussion. I was feeling very fearful because of what the spirit world was telling me to do – "Confess the lie." It was so scary – like undressing in front of a lot of people. So, when Jennifer asked if anyone wanted to share something – somehow my hand went up like it was being pulled up by the spirit world. I don't think I would have raised it again if she had not picked me first to share. Then I proceeded to tell the \$10 lie story in complete detail, exposing myself as a "piece of crap." It was very, very painful. I was expecting that I would be kicked out after my confession but no one condemned me. They only supported me – loved me up quite a bit. "Death of fear is certain."

Talk about being high – that night I was reborn. All the misery of the past six years left me. It was gone in an instant. My rebirth was a rebirth of conscience, which I think I had almost destroyed and lost.

That evening while talking with my new friends, I remembered the speed (drug) gift I had in my possession, which I had planned to give to my Army buddy upon my return to Hawaii. I got it out of my backpack and blew it all into the fireplace. I can't explain the change that came over me after that confession. It was 200%, or 500% or no a 1000% change. It was literally such a tremendous change to again know very, very clearly right from wrong.

I'll skip the next few wonderful years to June 24, 1982. True Father and True Mother gave me exactly what I asked for in prayer and in my diary. I had worked a bit with some of the Japanese sisters. So, when True Parents gave me "my Yoko," I knew God had given me exactly what I had asked for and so much more. I wanted a sister with great faith, and she was that. I never knew much about humility, but she taught me that through her example. Yoko and I had 7 children together. She is a great Mom, also a great grandma and, if I were a daughter-in-law, I think I'd say she is a great and understanding mom-in-law. God gave us four of those seven children to take care of – Raymond, Seung Kook, Joy and Grace. Great children – the two boys are now parents themselves. Grace was blessed to Charles last May 8th and my Joy will perhaps be the best of them all in the future. That accounts for only four children. James, our third child passed away after five months. I suffered a lot. My Yoko had to take care of me as well as the children. Our last two children were Mike and Joshua – offering children to two other families.

My wife has been my life since the time of our Blessing in Madison Square Garden. True Father forgave all of our wrongdoings, and I felt truly forgiven. So far, Seung Kook and Sun Marie have given us five grandchildren (even one made in Japan). Raymond and Stephanie have given us two boys.

In summary, I think I have done well for a boy living in the depths of Hell for six years. I guess God kept His eye on me. I always feel grateful – I feel like God has given me everything. That is why I feel, I am the richest man in the world.

Postscript

Two significant points in my life.

When I first met my wife, I quickly realized she was a better person than I was. I was very good but she was better. It comes from her humility. Actually, in our 41 years of Blessed Marriage, we have never argued. Yoko and I have always done our best to model a loving, caring couple to our children. I feel like we did a very good job. I practiced a concept that Dr. Yong gave a name to – self-denial. We always had a little half-joke that if Yoko and I disagree – Who's right? Of course, Yoko.

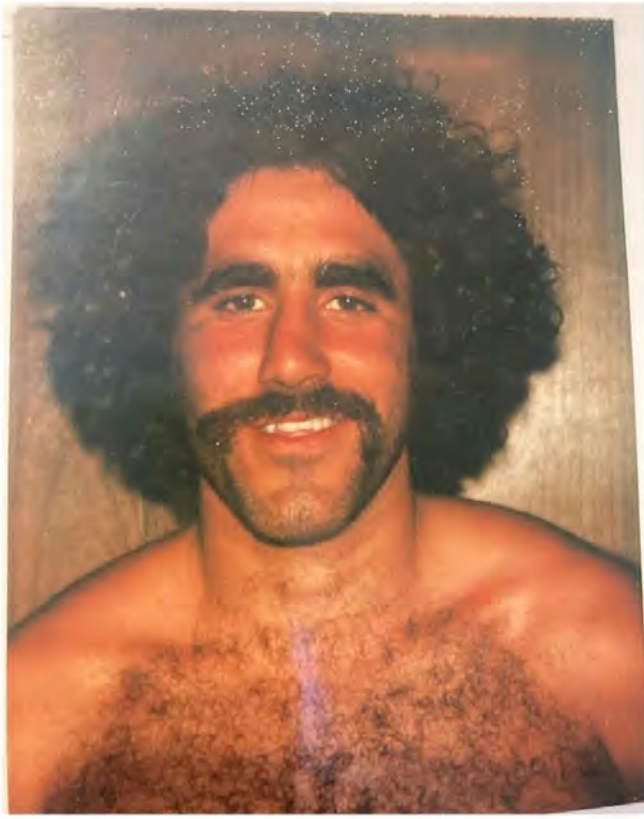
I joined the Post Office when I was 47 years old. I feel like God helped me to get that job. Already my legs were not in good shape. My boss was a bully. I had lots of experience with bullies in Middle Catholic School as a boy. During my first three or four years at the Post Office, my friend Tommy was the main target of the bullying. Tommy was smarter than me though. He would just laugh off the bosses screaming and mumble things under his breath. Tommy retired after three or four years. Then I became the main target of complaint because of my lack of speed. With this boss, Eddie, I felt unprotected like he was going to stab me in the back at any moment. The guy was arrogant and it brought out the same kind of arrogance in me big time.

In all of my different missions in the past, I always felt I was a good Cain – I called myself Candy Cain. But in this situation, it was like war. I met my enemy and his name was Eddie. When Eddie would scream at me, his nose was about 6-8 inches from my face. I could feel his spit as he screamed, and the last time it happened and I retaliated, I knew for sure he felt my spit on his face. After that fight I said under my breath, "What a jerk!" and then I heard the words, "You were pretty much of a jerk too."

I had a seven-hour walk in front of me delivering the mail. While walking, I decided that was my last fight. Not because of him but because of me. Somehow God's message through True Father to forgive the enemy found its way through to me. It only took me 13 years to get that message, but I got it and, in the end Yoko and I blessed him. I'm so grateful for my enemy because in my church life that experience became the second biggest leap forward in my life of faith, after my public confession in Oakland.

This picture is 5 months before I joined.







Fishing and More in New Zealand

by Barry Geller



March 6 to March 15

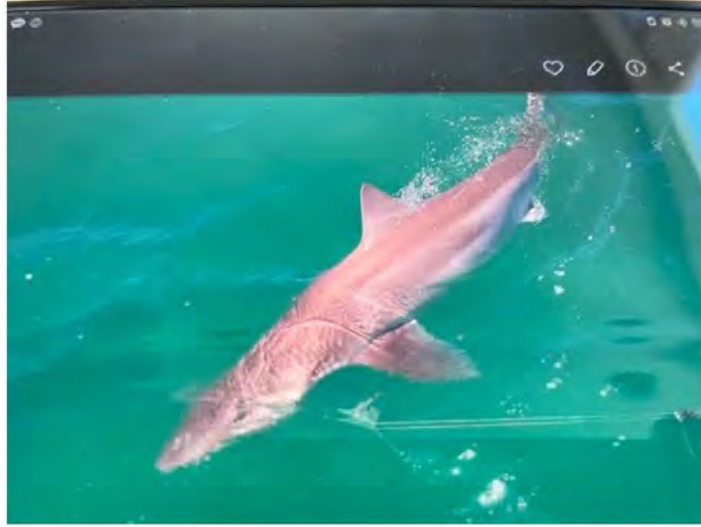
New Zealanders are known as the Kiwi country because the unusual, nocturnal, wingless Kiwi is the national bird. Learning the culture and traditions of New Zealand was one reason we came, but the main reason for our trip was to compete in the 2024 Fishing World Cup tournament, occurring once every four years. The tournament, founded by Father and Mother Moon, was a great success. 15 teams from many parts of the world joined. There were 71 participants. Participants came from as far as Finland, Uruguay, USA, Korea, Japan, Fiji, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Estonia, Scotland, Kazakhstan, Brazil and the Cook Islands.

The contest winners were determined by the kilogram weight of fish caught by individuals and teams. Uruguay won the team competition, and a New Zealander won the individual prize of \$10,000.00 dollars. The contest lasted for two days. We fished in the beautiful waters off the coast of Auckland. In total, over a ton of fish were caught, mostly Snappers.



Above are the tournament organizers and the three prize winners.





Too bad we couldn't count this 75-pound brown shark as part of our weight for the contest. I wrestled with this fish for 10 minutes.



Beautiful Auckland skyline at 5:30 AM.



Our young team members included Peter Abutin, Yoshio Ishikawa, Tyrone Clark and Eric Faucher.





Our elders included Hiro Matsuura, Tsugio Kumagai, Barry Geller and Hisashi Horibe.

After the tournament and a one-day conference about the ocean and how to care for it, we travelled to the south of the north island of NZ.



We visited a center for the Maori people, the indigenous tribe of NZ. They served us a delicious organic meal, sang and taught us some of their traditions. Among the stops we made along our tour were the Glo-worm caves, a Kiwi sanctuary, Hobbiton (from *Lord of the Rings*) and several other points of interest. Upon our return, we went to the top of the Sky-tower in Auckland. We are grateful to True Parents for this great ocean tradition and to the tournament organizers and staff. We look forward to the next tournament in 2028.





< Your Story

My Tribute to God >

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