

## My Tribute to God - I Am The Richest Man In The World - My Tribute To God

Bruce Burns (and his Yoko)

April 7, 2024



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

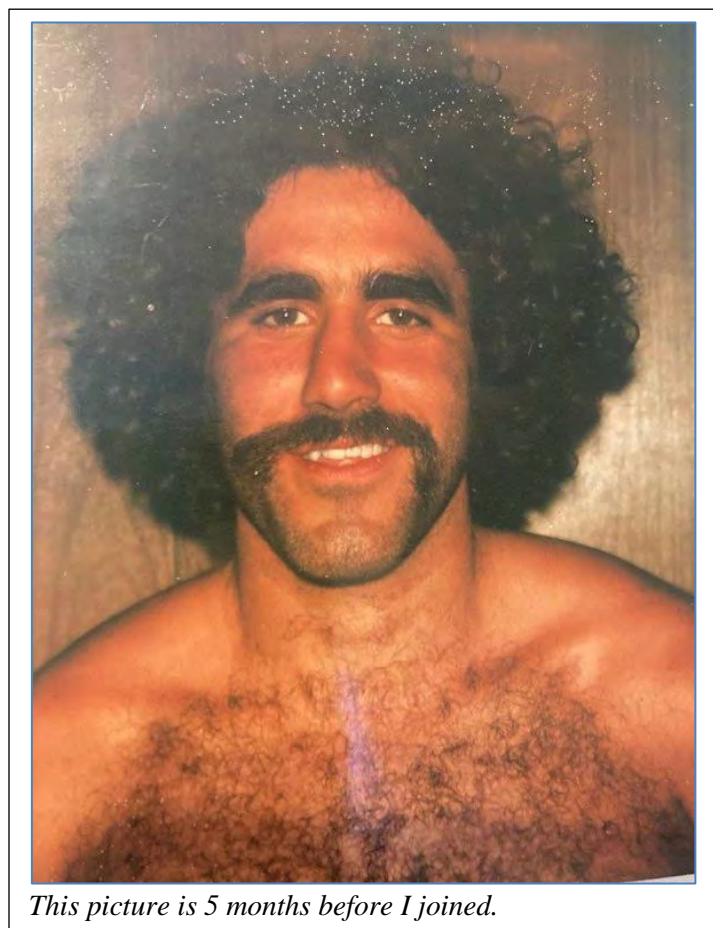
was. I was totally lost - I, who never really felt a day of depression in my entire life. That was the beginning of my five and a half years in hell. I lived in that hell trying to find my way back to my old self. I was still smoking marijuana sometimes (no longer religiously). Then, on March 25, 1975 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.



*This picture is 5 months before I joined.*

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.

As I was walking down the street in San



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.