

Chapter V: Ocean Church

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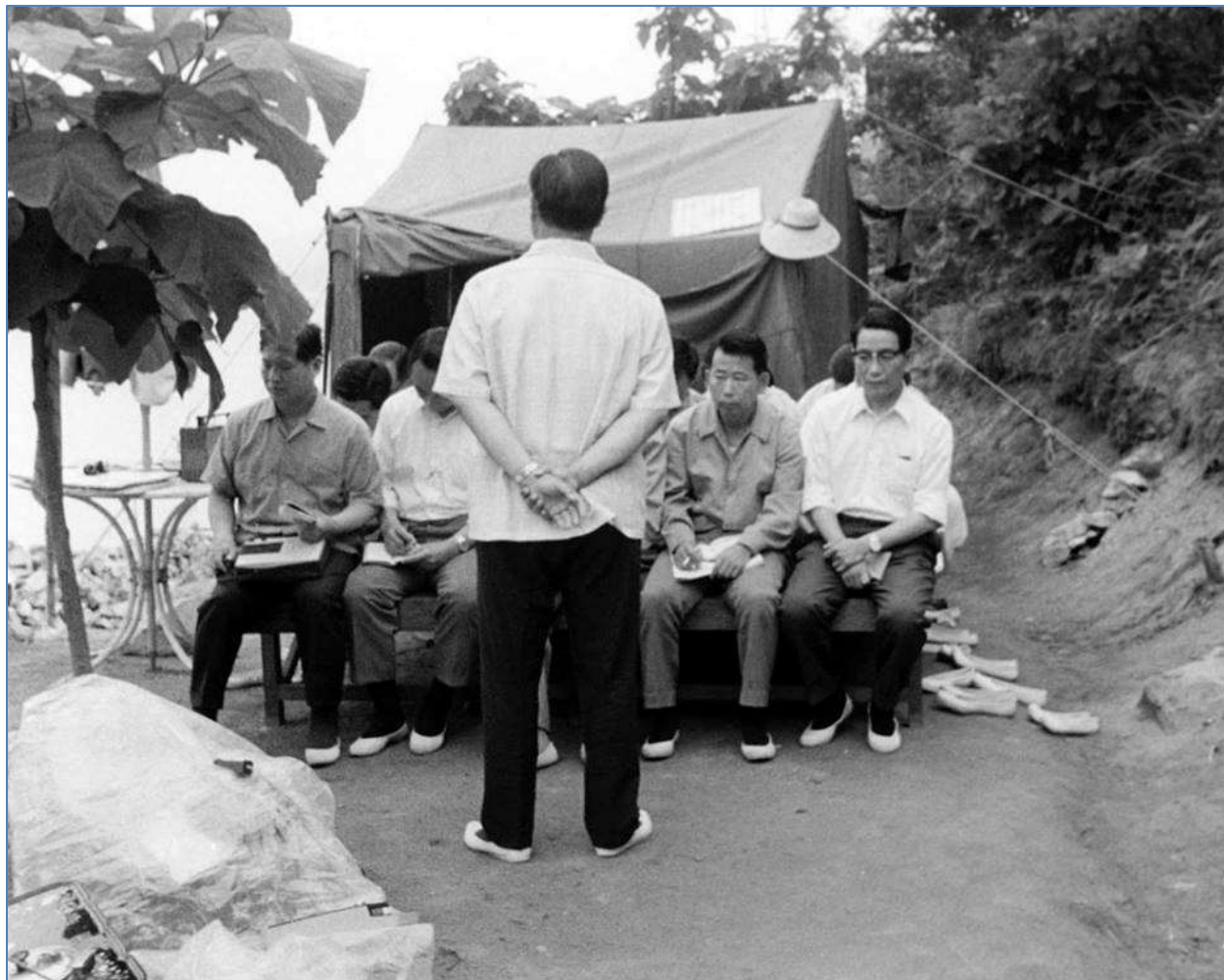


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So here I was driving around with a broken foot when I found out that I was supposed to go to Gloucester Massachusetts, that Sun Myung Moon wanted to meet with all the seminarian graduates in a couple of days. (Now at this time there were only three classes that had graduated.)

I decided to work our way to Gloucester across "back country," off of the main highway and we would fundraise small towns on the way. With only one day left we had to make quite a jump the last night across half of Massachusetts, and we were in the backroads.

The spirit was very light in the van, we were having a great time telling stories and so forth. So sure enough, we got lost. Then we ran out of gas. Somewhere. Very small town. All two or three buildings, one of which was a gas station, were closed this late at night. After questioning half the town we located the owner and he grudgingly opened up long enough for a tank of gas.

When we finally reached the "city" we were shooting for it was about three in the morning and the "city" was a hell of a lot bigger looking on the map than it was on the earth. There were no motels in the town, and only one hotel that was incredibly small, incredibly expensive, and allowed no more than two people to a room.

Bummer.

Actually it would have been a bummer, but the whole night expedition had been such a comedy of errors and everybody was in such a good mood it was like a joke and a challenge. We drove around for a while trying to figure out what to do ("Let's set the van on fire and keep warm" was I believe one of the suggestions.) Finally we were just all too tired to care. We stopped the van in a parking lot of a factory overlooking the town. The sisters stayed inside the van in their sleeping bags to sleep. We brothers took out their sleeping bags, took cardboard boxes that we found discarded on the side of the factory and placed these on the frozen ground, and then shivered ourselves in dreamland since sleep was not possible. It seemed like about five minutes later that all the factory workers started showing up for work, so we had to leave; still having not slept and now totally wiped out and half frozen. I took the team to the warmest Denny's I could find to try to make it up to them. Everyone was either a saint or just too frozen to care; I never heard one word of complaint and everyone took it like it a great story to tell someday.

I'm sure that even now, some decades later, they still remember that night. (I hope wherever you are, that if you read this, you believe me when I say "thanks". You were incredible.)

(I also sometimes wonder about the people that saw us sleeping in the snow on pieces of cardboard that day... What did they think? Did they talk about us in that town after we left? How long did they remember that?)

Anyway, everyone fundraised sleepwalking for half a day and then we went to Gloucester. They dropped me off with my one small suitcase of belongings; I would call the CARP headquarters when Sun Myung Moon was finished with us seminarians, and we would make arrangements to meet.

At least that is what I thought. As it ended up I never met the team again, and that day was the last time I ever saw most of them.

The place we met at used to be a huge house for a Catholic Cardinal. It was designed to be a center for priests and other clericals, having dozens and dozens of rooms and over one hundred beds. When it went on the auction block Unification Church had bought it through a straw. In what was typical for how the Unification Church and Sun Myung Moon were treated all over America at that time, the town of Gloucester immediately rezoned the estate to be a one family dwelling so that Unification Church could not use the house as they intended (and as the Catholic Church had used it for decades).

Sun Myung Moon had been in Gloucester for some months already, fishing for the Bluefin tuna. (The magazine Yankee Magazine had written an article, "Why Moonies Catch More Fish" which actually painted a very good image of our members, about these summer exploits.) He had spent the entire summer with a couple of dozen Unification Church members leaving Gloucester on the boats every morning at 2:30 am, going out to the "tuna grounds" some twenty five miles out at sea, coming home late in the evening, and catching a heck of a lot of Bluefin tuna. They had used seven boats that summer, and on some days even a large rubber raft, and actually his own boat had caught more tuna than any other boat that summer - even the commercial fishermen who have been doing this for decades.

(The Bluefin tuna used to be a sport fish, with NO commercial value off the coast of Gloucester. Then a number of years back, the Japanese found out that they could pack these 900 lb. fish in ice, fly them to Tokyo, and then immediately sell them for sashimi for incredible, incredible, incredible prices. Now, pound for pound, the Bluefin tuna is one of the world's most expensive fish.)

Sun Myung Moon talked for several hours about his ideas about "Ocean Church". He explained that he had figured out that God had saved the Ocean for Unification Church and Sun Myung Moon. All of the other industries in the world were already developed and entrenched, but the ocean's treasures were there, unseen and relatively untouched. We would develop the harvesting of the ocean. We would feed the starving nations of the world. We would assist all governments in stopping the flow of drugs by becoming the righteous masters of the oceans...etc., etc., etc. Sun Myung Moon had already started two boat factories, one in Alabama for large fishing boats, and one in Queens, NY for smaller, 28', boats.

After several hours of explaining his vision to us, Sun Myung Moon looked at each and every one of in the room and he picked thirty "pioneers" to go out to various cities with one of our own boats and start making this vision become a reality. It was seen as a very special moment in the history of the Church, and Sun Myung Moon himself assigned each seminarian he had picked to one of thirty different seaport cities all over the United States, and Sun Myung Moon himself wrote their names (in the Korean alphabet) over the cities they were going to on a huge map of the USA.

Yep. I was picked. Broken foot and all. So to this day, somewhere, somewhere in one of Sun Myung Moon's buildings, there is this map with my name written in Korean over Key West Florida. Which is where I was less than 72 hours later with two illegal immigrants, Stan and Ernst, from those famous fishing countries, Ireland and Switzerland. We were each given a thousand dollars to start us off, and we were told that within a few weeks we would receive a 28' boat and a van from headquarters.

When we arrived in Key West at the bus station it was already after 11pm. We stumbled out onto Duval street, each with one duffel bag, and I asked the first guy we saw where the nearest hotel was.

"Are you tourists?" He asked.

"No. We just moved here." I replied

He laughed, hard. "Man, you all just moved to the asshole of the world." And he walked away about the same time that we all noticed that he had a live boa constrictor snake around his neck to go with his many tattoos and earrings.

Now all of this was totally unexpected. I had, of course, been in the frame of mind where I was willing to spend the rest of my life on college campuses trying to teach students of the DP. Now I had to totally readjust my mindset and try to think of ideologically conquering the world from fishing boats. The first night in Key West I had an incredibly vivid dream in which Sun Myung Moon and his wife had me and my mom and dad come for supper, a mini celebration to see me start off this new mission.

It was not hard to find an apartment; however, it was extremely difficult to find work. My idea was that since we knew absolutely nothing about fishing (and we didn't yet have our own boat) that we should work on other fishing boats, learn, and earn some money. I still had a broken foot in a cast, so it was up to Stan and Ernst. They made the mistake however of approaching all the fishing boats in Key West together. Since both of these guys had the appearance of altar boys instead of warriors of the ocean and since Key West has the largest population per capita in the world of homosexuals, all the fishermen thought that it was extremely strange that this gay couple was looking for work on a fishing boat. (I found this out first hand later, from some guys on a boat that Stan and Ernst had approached.)

So I figured that it was up to me to set the example and to get work on an "outside" (i.e. "non-Unification Church) fishing boat. I sat on the side of the bathroom tub and ran water over the plaster cast and with a pocket knife finally got the thing off. My foot was incredible tender.

I spent a few hours going to the various marinas where the commercial guys kept their boats and asking if anyone needed another hand on the boat.

Nothing. The closest I got was at the marina on the old Navy Base. Here there was one boat was empty except for one guy in his twenties who told me that the captain needed another hand, but was gone and he didn't know when the captain would return. The guys on the next boat told me that they didn't need anyone but also warned me that the captain on that previous boat was a total asshole.

After about another hour here of failure, I hobbled on the solar heated sidewalk towards a bus stop to return to our apartment. It was already after five, it was very hot, I was tired and my foot was throbbing with pain.

"Hey motherfucker," the bearded monster in the car yelled at me, "you want a job on a shrimp boat?"

"Yeh, I do," I said. (Do I with this guy?, I thought.)

"Well, get your ass in the car!"

I got in the back seat of the car, and he screeched the tires and took a hard left, going the wrong way down a one way street. (I thought this might be very symbolic of things to come). As he speeded down the wrong way on this street, giving the horn and obscene gestures to the surprised drivers coming the unfortunate right way down the street, he introduced the very tough looking broad in the front seat as "one of the crew" and bragged how he had gotten her to take a leave of absence from her regular job at the strip bar to work with him.

I was starting to wonder if perhaps this guy was the asshole captain that I had missed earlier, especially since we were headed back to the marina on the Navy Base.

He was.

He had the guy I had talked to earlier run me back in the car to the apartment so I could get a few clothes. Within the hour we were headed out to sea. It was going to be one hell of a long day. You see, down in Key West they fish for the shrimp at night.

Now I had never been on a shrimp boat before. Everything was new. They have two huge long metal rods with pulley systems that extend out to the left and right of the boat. Each of these rods pulls a net through the water. The front of each net is held open by a large pair of wooden "doors". The nets are pulled in every hour or so. A thick separate rope is used to hoist the nets onto the deck. There is a metal drum about a foot in diameter which, when engaged, is powered off of the diesel boat engine. The rope is wrapped one and half times around this and then one can use his hand to pull the rope which tightens it around the drum and then the drum pulls in the nets, which can have hundreds of pounds of shrimp and "trash". With just the tight amount of tension, one can have the net hovering suspended in the air. What you do not want to do is to pull up the net too fast and get it stuck in the pulley, nor do you want to drop the net on the deck too fast and smash the shrimp up. When the net is finally lowered on the deck the tie holding the bottom closed is released and hundreds of pounds of shrimp and slimy other stuff splashes all over the

deck. The nets are immediately put back in the water, then the three of us (me, the other guy, and the stripper) would sort the contents while the captain makes another "run."

The basic idea here is to separate the shrimp from the "trash." This is back-breaking work. You sit on a small box and, with rubber gloves on, you start digging through hundreds of pounds of fish, shrimp, crabs, and debris. (Its unbelievable how many beer cans are on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico.) The walls of the decks are about three feet high and have small doors about a foot square which we open; it is through these small doors that the "trash" is thrown back to the ocean. You push the shrimp to one side and the "trash" behind you and out one of these doors. The shrimp are incredibly strong for their size and they wrap their bodies around your finger and pinch the hell out of you.

The crabs are the real problem. They grab your finger with a claw before you can blink. If you try to pull it off with your other hand then they grab a finger on the other hand before you can blink. So there you are with a little mini-monster from the deep pinching the hell out of both your hands as it stares you in the eyes. If you pull your hands apart one of two things happens, either the claw slips off one hand, in which case it immediately grabs and assists the other claw already pinching the hell out of the remaining hand; or, the claw comes off completely, the detached appendage still pinching the hell out of your remaining hand.

The only way to deal with the crabs when they grab you is to fling them, backhand, as hard as you can toward the wall of the boat. When you do this then one of two things happen; either the claw slips off your finger and the crab is smashed/crushed against the wall of the boat; or, the claw comes off and the crab is smashed/crushed against the wall of the boat but the detached claw is still pinching the hell out of your hand, like some miniature "terminator" appendage.

Anyway all of this is with respect to the regular crabs. There's also stone crabs, but these are a totally different story. These guys you stay away from; their claws look steroid-induced and they can break your finger in an eye blink.

And then there's these tiny (two inch long?) bright red fish that are poisonous. Their spines will immediately prick you, even through the rubber gloves, if you touch one your hand will swell up two or three times its normal size.

Of course after the first few minutes of culling the shrimp from the trash "our friends" appear.

The sharks.

The small fish and wall-smashed crabs are a trail of food for these guys. They are over six foot long and they will be with us the entire night swimming next to the boat, just below the water surface, shadows of death, barely visible from the lights above the deck.

The deck has very bright lights and VERY loud music. The captain has this harsh Blondie album going over and over and over, at decibels that would match a jet engine. My fellow shipmate is sans bra in a low cut thin T-shirt and culling shrimp to the rhythm, and this here missionary guy is wondering what kind of world I have gotten myself into.

We put the shrimp in these net-like bags, dip them in a saline solution and then lower them into the hold, which is a freezer. About the time that we get all the shrimp separated, bagged and into the hold it is time to pull in the nets again.

This goes on and on and on all night long. The only change in the drama is that on one haul the captain calls one of the other crew to his bedroom and one of the other crew has to watch the steering wheel, and I am culling by myself for quite a while.

Somehow I survive the night. My foot is throbbing, my entire body is sore, and my back is numb with pain.

Daylight finally mercifully comes. Porpoises and seagulls now surround and play with our boat and eat the trash as the "friends" disappear with the darkness.

Just as we finish the last haul and are cleaning up, a sport fishing boat comes to our boat's side and they ask if it can trade some beer for bait. (I find out later that this is a common practice.) The captain does it, but he is obviously bent out of shape. When they leave he is totally possessed.

"Goddamn rich bastards in their little prissy sports boats!"

"We work our asses off every night so they can have their prissy little goddamn shrimp cocktails!"

"Goddamn pricks!"

And he has brought out a rifle and proceeds to try to shoot all the seagulls which have swarmed around our boat. This here missionary guy is wondering what kind of world I have gotten myself into.

I fall into bed like a rock landing in soft mud. I think that I am asleep before my head hits the pillow.

And then, it seems like only minutes later, it is time to go to work again. The sun is already starting to set.

Only this time its harder. Much harder. The wind has kicked up and the boat is rocking roughly. In my entire life this is only my second day on the ocean and I'm feeling like my guts are being slammed against the sides of my body - I feel sick.

The stripper has somehow managed to cook supper(or is this breakfast?) but all the plates (and my stomach?) have to held in place as the boat is rocking and rolling with the waves and wind.

We start our "runs" and after the first run the friends have appeared. It has started to drizzle and the whole night is taking on a creepy eerie feeling. The water is so rough that occasionally the outrigger, stretched out horizontally into the night over the water and pulling the net, digs into a wave and the whole ship shudders.

The captain is either having a very bad day or was born emotionally upset. The other guy told me last night that this boat costs over a hundred thousand dollars and that the captain had only a fourth grade education before he started working full time shrimping with his dad. Anyway, the way the captain screams at everyone and curses as often as most people blink, makes me believe that he will remain on shrimp boats his entire life.

I don't know if its a psychological avalanche thing, or whether its a spiritual avalanche thing, but the other two (the stripper and the other guy) seem to take everything out on me. They are both ordering me around and cussing at me....

Also, from the constant "gripping" required by the feet muscles with the rocking rolling deck, my foot is throbbing with pain; I remember that less than thirty hours ago it was still in a cast....

On the second run we somehow pick up half the bottom of the ocean, one of the nets has dug into the mud and over half the contents is mud and shells and beer cans. It takes forever to sort this stuff because we are having to individually pick the shrimp out of the trash. There's also a million jelly fish and man-of-wars so we're having to be extra careful about all the poisonous stingers....

The third haul is the same lousy combination of half ocean bottom and the captain is trying to figure out what is wrong, with some of the most creative swearing in the history of the world.

One of the cables is twisted on the outrigger. Yeh. About twenty feet out there in the night. One of the cables is twisted around one of the pulleys. This is what's causing the problem; the cable's caught and its probably causing the "doors" of the net to spin out of control, like a Charley Brown kite, into the ocean bottom.

I'm ordered by the captain, in no uncertain terms to crawl out there and fix it.

Yeh. Right.

I mean these outriggers are basically metal arms sticking out over the ocean. Usually they are barely above the surface of the water, and tonight with the rough sea they are sometimes dipping into the water. I've been feeling seasick all night. The "friends" are not visible at the moment, but they have been following the boat and they are here. Besides, I can't even swim.

I could die trying to do this.

But its very clear I will die if I don't do this. There is a blankness and emptiness in the captains eyes that is scary. There is the very obvious possibility that if I do not do this, that I could simply disappear over the side of the ship.

So how does this here missionary guy take all this?

As I crawl out on the outrigger, I feel that heaven and God knows my situation. If it is God's will, I will be protected. If I do die, well, it is my offering to God and somehow in His indemntron battle with Satan, it is an offering that He will use for His providence. But I'm thinking of how throughout history people have been forced to work on the ocean, often as prisoners or as conscripts. I think of the stories I have

read of the floggings and the mistreatment of sailors, and I feel that this is a precious moment to God - that He has someone who is willing to place himself in the middle of this rough universe of the ocean men and make this an offering to Him.

I also think of the story of Jonah, and how the rest of the crew is being mean and spiteful to me. And I wonder if this is just one of the spiritual laws of the universe, that in a small group of people that the resentment of all the other people will somehow focus towards one person, especially if that person is on a mission from God.....?

I end up completely upside down, my face facing the sky with my legs and arms wrapped around the outrigger and my back just inches above the water. (oh, god, i hope the "friends" don't see me..)

somehow I manage to get the cable untangled and to writhe my way back to the deck.

There are no thanks. Nothing. Its back to the backbreaking work of culling the shrimp. I'm still feeling sick. I then throw up one -- of the three times I will do so this night....

Somehow I survive the night. Probably my foot is throbbing, my entire body is sore, and my back is numb with pain, but I'm too sick to notice. I fall asleep like a rock landing in soft mud, wondering if I will throw up in my sleep.

In what seem a few moments later a few hours have passed. The sea has gotten even rougher, there is a coast guard weather warning out on the radios. We head back to Key West.

At the fish house at the dock the bags of frozen shrimp are unloaded, and I am paid in cash. (Quite well, actually.) I go back to our apartment to sleep. Somehow, even as small as Key West is, I never see those three people again.

Ernst also manages to get a job on a boat. Its a very small handline boat, and he is the only crew. Basically the captain goes out for a few days at a time, to his own secret "grouper holes" and they chum and fish. There's no cabin or bedrooms like on a large shrimp boat, and Ernst sleeps on top of the engine cover. He learns a lot that they never taught him on the oceans of Switzerland, and it is invaluable to us when our own boat arrives.

(The "Good Go" boats are a story in themselves. I'll talk about them later.)

After we got our boat (and a van) we spent every day we could on the ocean. Even if the water was rough, we would go out for at least a short time. We did this as our offering. There were some days when our boat was the only boat to leave the marina. Poor Stan was seasick every day for forty days. At first we were such ignorant stupid fishermen that people talked about us and joked about us. It took about a year and a half to pay our dues, to learn, and get any respect.

Actually the fishing around Key West is incredible, and there were days when we actually caught enough snappers or king mackerels to more than pay for the gas and the food.

There were times that we fished at night, and it was beautiful, marvelous, almost mystical... The water would be as calm as glass, the lights of the island of Key West would reflect sometimes even miles all the way out to the boat, and the fish would cause the clear green water to glow a golden trail when you caught one. (Yeh, there's this algae, or whatever the microscopic stuff in the water is, that causes a chemical gold glow at night from the friction of the fish through the water.)

I don't think that anyone who spends a lot of time on the ocean cannot feel that there are times that the ocean has a majestic mystical magical feel to it. Its a very humbling experience. Anyone who has ever been out on the ocean in a storm in a small boat knows how humbling the raw power of the ocean can be...

There were a lot of fun moments fishing. One time we were fishing at night and a moray eel with all of its fangs got loose on the boat (of course we were all barefoot) and we couldn't see the thing in the dark and the three of us were climbing over each other to get out of the well of the boat and up on top of the bow. Another time Ernst somehow reeled in a 200lb shark to the side of the boat and then tried to gaff the thing and bring it on board - it got pissed off and gave its body one jerk, snapping the pole of the gaff, the fishing line, and Ernst's ego.

Also there is the king mackerel season at the end of February in which these migratory fish swarm the coral reefs and feed around Key West. There will be in these huge schools, with the electronic fish finders going crazy and showing a solid black cloud of over sixty feet of fish. They average over seven pounds a fish, with some of the monsters getting over 40 lbs. They have razor sharp teeth, fight like hell, and are a lot of fun to catch. There were a couple of guys from New Jersey who would come down every year just for the King mackerel season. These guys were good and there were some days when the two of them would pull in, with rod and reel, over a thousand pounds of King mackerel a day (at \$1.25 a pound, and all in straight cash with no records! You see, Florida at that time allowed its sports fishermen to sell their catch) The rumor around the dock was that these two characters even had the gall to be collecting unemployment while they went on this paid fishing vacation trip!

But most of the time our fishing skills and the fishing seasons did not allow us to get rich from our little sport fishing boat. There was the added complication that the boat was actually owned by the Unification Church, and therefore we were always getting mixed signals from Unification Church National Headquarters that if we made some commercial venture we could possibly jeopardize the Unification Church tax exempt status.

Anyway, the easiest way to stay alive was to drive up to Miami once or twice a month and fundraise. We could raise more money in a day selling flowers than in a week of fishing.

But this was not what Father wanted, is what we would be told by Daikon Onuki, who was the Japanese guy who was the national director of this Ocean Church venture. Father saw the future of the Unification Church and the financial fortunes for changing the world as coming from the ocean.

So Zola decided to sell fish.

Zola is a gem of a guy. He looks like he was born in some weight-lifting gym in Hungary and was being groomed by the communists for the Olympics. He was born behind the then iron curtain, and he and his brother defected as teenagers, hiking through the mountains at night to freedom (and they never got to see their parents again). Zola's a thick strong guy with an innocent heart, and he was in the Ocean church project in Miami. There's two stories about Zola that indicate the person he is. One story is that when John Lennon was shot and killed: Zola heard this on the car radio, closed his eyes and said a prayer for the soul of John Lennon - and smashed into the back of the car at the red light in front of him. The other, years later, when Zola had been sent up to Alaska to work on the Unification Church boats (under the auspices of "Master Marine"), he was on a boat that was caught in a Northern storm in the treacherous Bering Straights. The bilge pump had failed, the seal around the door on the deck to the hold was defective, and water was seeping into the hold and slowly sinking the boat. In response to their S.O.S. calls a Coast Guard helicopter was flying out with an emergency pump, and another boat in the area was trying to find them, and it seemed very likely that the boat might go under before help arrived. Zola was told to stay on the deck in back of the cabin to watch the rear of the deck to warn the others if the door of the hold went completely under water.... Suddenly, no one could see Zola, and there were no answers to their calls for him.

When the helicopter arrived, they found Zola had lashed himself to a beam and fallen asleep.

When I asked Zola how he could fall asleep in the middle of a storm in the Bering Straights on a sinking boat, he replied.

"Oh I figured heavenly Father would protect us. And I was just so tired, I needed to sleep."

So anyway, in the middle of winter (if you can call it that in Miami) Zola and the crew with him starts selling "fresh fish." Zola goes to a fish wholesaler, buys a few hundred dollars worth of frozen fish, throws them into the big igloo coolers in water to thaw them out, parks the van in a black neighborhood in Miami and puts out foldout tables and signs saying "Fresh Fish."

The activity is incredible. Soon Zola and his three crewmen, wearing their rubber deck boots and winging fillet knives, are carving up red snapper and people from the neighborhood are standing in line to buy. Zola's explaining that they are fishermen and they have their own boat and they can sell the fish direct to the consumer, cheaper and fresher. Soon they are making return trips to the wholesaler and the biggest problem is how to thaw the fish out fast enough. Even the police drive by a few times during the day, to scout the activity. Zola has no permits or business licenses of course, but this is evidently not the type of criminal activity in a rough black neighborhood that Don Johnson and his boys from Miami Vice are going to bust.

One black man comes storming back to Zola's sidewalk enterprise, obviously angry. "You told me these fish were fresh," He yells at Zola. "When I got home I could tell this fish has been frozen!"

Zola calmly brings him away from the other paying customers. "Come on, man." Zola says, "Its off season right now. You know that. How is anyone going to have fresh fish? What I meant is that these are the freshest fish you can get right now!"

Zola is one of those people who has no hidden agenda in any dealings with anyone. His heart is innocent. This explanation is so simple and pure, and Zola seems so honestly hurt that his words or motivation would be accused, that the man is totally pacified, although he does walk away shaking his head in disbelief.

So the scales and the fish bones continue to fly as they fillet and dehead and pretty up the fish to the customers' requests. And National headquarters is notified of the incredible success they are having in Miami. It is obvious to all in Ocean Church that some huge spiritual breakthrough has happened and someone has found a way to totally unite with Father's words has found a key to victory. In a couple of weeks even Daikon appears to witness this scaly Pentecost. He is impressed by the intensity of the activity (it is time consuming work to fillet frozen fish with non-electric knives...!).

So soon the word is out to all the Ocean Church "centers" that the thing to do to get victory in Ocean Church is to sell fish on the sidewalks from the back of the vans. Very soon there is a "spin" on the theology worked out that this is the thing to do. You see, working on the boats is closer to Father's heart and intent, but this is necessary to make a foundation to get success on the ocean.....

Problem is that no one does any analysis. Zola is not the type of guy to sit down with receipts and adding machines. He just knows that he has pockets and pockets and pockets of one dollar bills. When some of us start pushing to understand the reality, we find its a bust. They are selling the fish at so much a pound, but they are cutting off skins and scales and bones and weight. The fact is after hundreds and hundreds of dollars a day in revenues, they are only averaging \$20 to \$30 a person in profits - and this is because the guys are working for free!

Anyway, some of us in Ocean Church never stopped selling flowers to survive. The rest of them returned to it.

Its difficult to describe why we were doing what we were doing. I mean, here we were going out on the sea every day in these little boats and to everyone else we looked kinda silly - we weren't that good at fishing, we went out when the bad weather precluded anything productive, and we went out when the season and the seas were quiet and nobody was catching fish.

But to us, the messiah had sent us out (even hand-picked us, by gosh!), and this was a historical mission, sort of like Saint Paul, that would really only be understood with time. I often used to wonder what the day by day life of the Biblical figures was really like; and I would imagine that they had many, many "space out" days in between those few miraculous days that one reads about. I figured that probably, most of the time, their days were spent wondering what they were doing and what was going to become of their "mission", and probably they even spent a lot of time fighting their own doubt and having to remember their own few "magic" days of faith that testified so strongly that there was actually something powerful and deep behind the innocuousness of their day by day confusion.

So the real issue every day was faith and meaning. There were millions of people already passed away in spirit world who never had the chance to live in the age of the messiah. There were thousands and thousands of spirit people who had suffered and even died on the sea, and had even resented God because of their struggles. So now when we were seasick and offered it up to God, it meant something to God and it even emotionally/spiritually liberated those in spirit world who had been unable to overcome their resentment in their own lifetime. Heaven and hell were watching us, us silly guys out on these small boats; and what we were doing was precious to God and meaningful - no matter how silly it looked to others.

That may sound so crazy, but one time, for example, I fell and really hurt my elbow - I had hit and damaged that "crazy-bone" nerve -- and for days my whole arm was tingling with pain and loss of feeling. I prayed and I prayed about this for days, "WHY?" and then after several days of praying for an answer, my mother suddenly called me from Texas to tell me that she had the most incredible, most vivid, real-like dream the previous night. In the dream, she said, she relived the time that my dad's dad had come to their house to hide from the police who were looking for him. He had been in a fight in the bar he owned and he had cut somebody's arm bad, real bad, with a knife. She said that in the dream he just wanted to tell her that he was really sorry that it had happened and that he had burdened her with coming to their house then. Also she said that she really felt that she was suppose to tell me about this dream.

I didn't tell try to explain it to her. But I knew that this was the answer to my prayers, that by this dream spirit world was telling me that our lives of following True Parents had a special position in front of heaven and we were restoring the "karma" and the failures of the past for the future history of the world.

So no matter how frustrating and non-rational it seemed, every day we were out on the ocean, no matter what the external results were, our mission was somehow precious, somehow important.

This was, depending on the day, either the dismal, difficult thing to believe in our life of faith or the wonderful blessing that was sometimes so real that it was a substantial feeling, a substantial presence....

The really exciting experience of Ocean Church, however, was catching the Bluefin Tuna in the summer off the coast of Gloucester.

All the Ocean Church centers are told to stop everything and fundraise for three weeks and raise so much "donation money" a person to go to Gloucester and fish for the Bluefin Tuna. I know that once we get to Gloucester, there will be absolutely no chance for anyone to have any spending money, so I tell my guys to fundraise until 5 pm for Ocean Church and then if they want to fundraise after that they can keep a certain percentage for personal needs during the summer. We end up making twice as much money for the Ocean Church summer project as any other center, even those that have twice as many members; but when word gets out that I "compromised" the "standard" I am accused by other jealous directors as something slightly less than satan.....

Anyway, we get to Gloucester and have a few days of training in Tuna Fishing. Some of it is navigational. Some of it is political with respect to the attitude of the local coast guard and some of it is a warning of the feelings of the local fishermen towards us.

Then they pull out these huge charts showing "The Bluefin Tuna Fishing Method, Invented by Sun Myung Moon."

(Sycophantic things like this I have a problem with. Basically the point to this fishing method is that you "chum", that is you cut pieces of dead fish and throw it in the water, and you also try to have your various fishing lines stretched out and weighted down so that your bait on hooks are right in the trail of the drifting pieces of the dead fish chum you are throwing in the water. Sun Myung Moon did not invent this. This is exactly the way the local fishermen have been fishing for tuna here for many decades before Sun Myung Moon ever appeared in Massachusetts. In all my years in the church, I have never been 100 percent clear on whether pronouncements like this is really due to some ego of Sun Myung Moon or whether it is totally the sycophantness of the inner circle around him. But this "invented by Sun Myung Moon" is typical, typical, typical in Unification Church.)

Anyway, for two months we went fishing for the Bluefin tuna. We used about thirty of the "Good-Go" boats that summer. On any given day sometimes up to a third of these boats would be out of commission because of engine problems. (I'll talk about these boats more in a moment.), Because of the design of the hull and the incredible dragging friction of the hull of the boat plowing through the water, often the outboard motors would just sort of "burn out." We had a couple of brothers who had taken courses in repairing these Mercury outboard motors, and they were incredibly busy all summer. You see, Kamiyama (one of Sun Myung Moon's trusted right hand Japanese leaders) tried to save costs wherever they could in building the boats. As a result, the boats were really underpowered with the size outboards they had on them. The other place they scrimped was with the electronics: cheap electronics. On any given day only half the fish finders were working and maybe 20% of the radios were kaput.

At 2:30 in the morning, every morning, we would get up and then leave a half hour later. Yeh, that is not a typo, that is 2:30 A.M., two-thirty in the morning, two and a half hours after midnight, 2:30 in the middle of the night.

Sun Myung Moon was not there that summer, but Gerhardt, this HUGE German guy, who had been Sun Myung Moon's bodyguard for years, drove Father's boat, the One Hope, every day. It was our standard to be the first people out at the fishing grounds every day, and to claim the best anchor-up spots for fishing. So every day we would drive the twenty five miles out, anchor up and usually have our fishing lines out before daybreak. By mid-morning there would usually be dozens and dozens of boats basically in a line along the ridge which the tuna fed. (On the weekends, it could even be a couple of hundred boats with the weekend warriors.) It was kind of an art to anchor up, because if you missed the top of the ridge, your anchor would keep going downhill and your chum and lines would be to far away from the ridge to catch

any tuna. If you got too high up on the ridge, your chum and lines would be too close from the ridge to catch any tuna. Anchoring could be incredibly frustrating and take a few times to get it right. Even with the fish/depth finder it was still an art, and much more difficult if your finder was not working; which was common. (On my boat we had to change ours a couple of times with those of boats whose engines were being repaired, but don't tell anybody.)

The fishing lines were thousand pound test leader cable going to thousand pound thin rope going to thousand pound test thick rope (which was easier to hold on to). The lines were weighted just behind the leader and the line was buoyed and stretched out to try to have the bait right in the "chum line" (the sinking pieces of fish that you would cut up and throw in the water to attract the tuna). The lines were a few hundred feet long, with the remaining line being rolled in a plastic laundry basket with a clothes line clip holding the line to the edge of the basket. When a tuna struck the line would sometimes be flying as much as six feet high and the whirl of the line leaving the clothes basket was a loud distinct noise like a miniature train. We also had a couple of large inflated rubber balls with clips on them to clip to the end of the line in case the fish actually took the entire line into the water when it struck.

So when a fish hit, one person would grab the live line with "fighting gloves" and, although it was impossible to stop a Bluefin tuna from running, try to slow it down. Another person would disengage the boat from the anchor line, with the anchor line having a buoyant ball attached to it so we could come back after the fight. The reason for this is two fold: First of all the fish can wrap the line around the anchor line and snap his line. Second of all, when the fish runs, you cannot remain anchored to one spot - the fish will take all the line. You fight the fish by having it pull the boat, and these huge fish will sometimes pull these heavy 28' boats two or three miles from the hookup spot. The rest of the crew would pull in the other lines (we usually had five to eight lines out). so that they would not get entangled with the live line. And then it was a battle to keep the line tight so that the fish could not spit the hook, and try to slowly gain line as these giant fish would drag the boat until it tired. Only then could you actually pull the monster up to the surface, harpoon it, and tie it to the side of the boat.

There is an incredible human element to catching a Bluefin tuna. The boats around you when you are fighting a fish are duty bound to "give you your fish." You are in the middle of dozens of boats, and only a few boats will catch a fish on a given day. When you hook up, the fish will usually drag you right through "the fleet" which means that the other boats will have to pull in their lines if your fish is about to run through them, or they will even have to "leave their anchor" if the fish actually goes right under their boat. This is the cardinal rule of the tuna fleet, to give the boat that is fighting a fish every chance to land it. It is also sometimes very difficult. The boats all around you have been chumming for hours, and when the fish bite, they usually bite all at once and most of the hookups during a day will happen right around the same moment. Therefore it is very difficult to take one's lines out of the water when someone has just hooked up near you. It is like you are sacrificing your own chance to catch one.

These are beautiful fish. Unbelievably beautiful fish. I caught four that summer, from 740 to 1,020 lbs. in size, with the largest being over 100 inches in length. Shimmering blue torpedoes. 40 mile an hour sashimi missiles. Gorgeous, noble creatures.

The glamour was definitely there in the catch, these magnificent monsters demanding your sense of dignity with their fighting effort, a magnificent muscular performance. But that part was only a tiny, tiny percentage of the time spent. Usually the daily experience was twelve hours of "chumming," cutting up dead smelly junk fish; getting rocked or bounced around by the ocean all day, fighting the creepy feeling of seasickness - and then coming home empty.

And, of course, everything was theologized. Fishing was a spiritual thing and if you caught fish it was because you had a pure heart and your heart was united with Father's heart and vision. So then it wasn't just the depression of knowing that you weren't catching anything, but the added depression of knowing that it was because of your sins or the sins of your ancestors.

Offer everything up. Offer everything up. Offer everything up.

I don't know if you've read *The Old Man and the Sea* by Hemingway (you know, the author who always reads like he wrote the original in poor Spanish and then got a poor translation to English.), but, Unification Church theology aside, there is definitely something spiritual or mystical about fishing for the Bluefin tuna.

Also there were days when it felt like creation itself decided to put on a display and the whales would come right next to the boat spouting spray on your boat and diving their huge bodies right under your boat, and the porpoises would suddenly appear and be jumping and diving all over the place. I'll never forget one day this happened all the sudden, like somebody had pushed a "start" button, very late in the day after all the "outside people" had left, just before dusk, and at the same moment we had six tuna hookups. ...there is definitely something mystical about fishing for the Bluefin tuna.

Now the real spin on the fishing was that God had saved the riches of the ocean for Sun Myung Moon and Unification Church to use to restore the world to His Ideal. So we didn't just intend to be good tuna fishermen or just monks offering our prayers and tribulations to heaven, but Sun Myung Moon really was suppose to dominate the fishing industry. Also Sun Myung Moon had bought not only the bishops mansion in Gloucester, but he had also bought a seafood restaurant with its own docks and lobster/fish house on the docks. This is where we kept our boats, and we slept on the boats at night.

But nobody else sold us their fish. Everybody else kept their boats at other fish house docks, as their fathers and grandfathers had done before them. Nobody had any reason to start selling their goods to us. We had no inventory. They didn't like us. They didn't trust us. A typical joke on the radio during the day between two commercial fishermen was:

"Hey Joe, what's brown and looks real good on a moonie?"

"What's that ,Bob?"

"A Doberman pincer."

So Unification Church offered a one week "tuna tournament" with \$100,000 in cash prizes to the three top winners.

There was a nominal entrance fee, and the main point was that anyone entering the tournament had to sell their fish to our fish warehouse for that week. The idea was that all the local fishermen would just not be able to resist the prize money and soon we would have everybody selling us their fish.

Never happened.

That particular summer, I actually won second place with a tuna over 1,000 lb. and over 100 inches long. I had one of the managers of International Seafoods on one side of me handing me a check for \$20,000 and then I had Daikon (another Japanese church leader) on the other side of me waiting for me to donate the money back to Ocean Church. Which I did.

The mode of the tuna tournament is a repeating modus operandi of Unification Church. Somehow, with non-church people Unification Church is always trying to "buy people." Other examples of this are:

The prize of the Rolls Royce with \$100,000 being offered as a lottery prize to entice people to go see the Unification Church movie "Inchon"

Extremely generous stipends and "holiday weekends" being offered to professors and political leaders to come and attend Unification Church sponsored seminars at semi-exotic places.

Extremely generous financial rewards offered to professionals to work with Unification Church projects, such as the salaries of the "outside" professors at the seminary and the author of the book "Inquisition" (which was touted as an independently written book telling the truth about Sun Myung Moon's tax evasion conviction.)

I've always had mixed feelings about this "buying of people".

Part of me thinks that money is a tool, and that satan has had people use money for evil reasons and has had people control other people by money for thousands of years. Therefore, why can't God use money to influence people in a good direction?

The other part of my feelings are "Why can't people be inspired enough by our ideals and good works to want to help us." Why are we so quick to "throw money at people".

Anyway, in the case of the fishermen of Gloucester, it didn't work. These blue collar workers couldn't "be bought". Not even with a \$100,000.

The "Good Go" boats are a story in themselves, and they are also another example of the "invented by Sun Myung Moon" sycophantness.

The Good Go boats are very similar to the Mako boats in their design, except for the hull, which "was invented by Sun Myung Moon." The bow of the boat has about a three foot deep "nose" that digs down into the water. Kamiyama was given the order by Sun Myung Moon to build 300 of these boats in a year.

Which, of course, he immediately began doing, kamikaziing members to make this goal and please Sun Myung Moon. The boats were built in the big building, called the "East Sun Building". Which is a huge seven story building in the industrial area in Queens New York. (The building has become a huge storage building for the church. If one wants to do a history of Unification Church then one should hire archaeologists and dig through this building. There are thousands of excess posters for various campaigns, thousands of Dr. Sontag books, tens of thousands of various church publications that were only partially or never used...)

The "public" story, the version given to Unification Church members, is that these boats were designed by Sun Myung Moon himself, and that they are the most incredible boats ever invented. (Sorry, but any of us who have spent hundreds of hours in these boats can tell you different.)

The bow of the boat has about a three foot deep "nose" that digs down into the water. Now, the sycophantic Unification Church elders will tell you that this is the great invention of Sun Myung Moon and that this deep "nose":

- 1: it helps keep the bow stable when one is fighting tuna
- 2: that it gives the boat a very smooth ride compared to other small boats because the hull digs into the water instead of bouncing roughly on top of the waves, and
- 3: That it keeps the boat stable in waves

Except for #1, Bullcorn! This crazy "nose" digs deep into the water, and in all but the calmest waters it's like having two rudders; one at the wrong end of the boat! In even slightly rough waters the Good Go boats fishtail all over and it's extremely difficult to maintain anything even close to a straight line. Furthermore, besides increasing the weight of the boat by hundreds of pounds (the 28' Good Go is over a thousand pounds heavier than the 25' Mako, which is a great boat), the "nose's" increased impedance in the water exorbitantly increases fuel consumption; the 28' Good Go only gets about one mile to the gallon of gas! (The Mako gets over four.)

At slow to medium speeds the "nose" digs into the water like a plow, spewing water high along both sides of the boat, and when even a slight wave hits the boat at the slightest angle, the boat swerves dramatically with all the passengers being dowsed thoroughly.

At high speeds, the boat becomes dangerous. The boat will hydroplane on the "nose" with the hull rising an additional three feet - its like its riding on a huge "ice-skate". The problem is that if a waves hits the side of this flying "nose," or if anyone in the boat shifts weight right or left, then the hull drops on its side and the nose digs into the water an angle causing the boat to veer sharply to one side with the entire boat almost laying on its side. I've seen it where the boat suddenly drops on its side and swerves in a half circle! It can be very scary.

(Now I know that the sycophantic reply will be to say how many hundreds of Korean guests have come to Alaska and ridden in the boats and that the boats are incredibly safe, and that what I am saying is not witnessed there, etc., etc. But I have also been there in Alaska, and when you are packing seven to ten people in one of these twenty-eight foot boats, in calm water, the speed is minimal and the boat sits so deep in the water that the effects of the nose are dampened. The "boat" is then just a huge water-plow at about one-half mile to the gallon of gas.)

One week in my life that I cannot forget is the week that the brothers and sisters who had been building the boats in the East Sun Building came tuna fishing. To me, the real disaster of the boat; worse than its design, is this story of the people that built the boat. People spent over a year of their lives, working for free, fighting the fumes of fiberglass and other chemicals every day to build three hundred of these boats. And even that would have been "okay" - for one can rationalize that they were offering this up to God, that this was a religious decision that they made. But what, it seems to me, was inexcusable is that they could not be totally proud of the project of their work.

When all the boat builders came to Gloucester for a week to fish for tuna, it became, after the initial excitement of being on the ocean, such a spirit of disappointment, frustration, and even cynicism about the performance of the boats. When the boats would fishtail or douse the passengers, or swerve madly; all they could do was laugh and crack cynical jokes. I just felt they should have been able to feel proud of what they built - regardless of their internal offering.

It just hurt me inside. I have many, many times wondered about this flaw in the boat design....I felt that my experiences around Father had taught me that that the Messiah doesn't have to know everything about everything. Maybe its just a fact that this Messsiah was not a great boat designer.

But also God needs each person's own participation and responsibility for them to achieve their own restoration. So I have often wondered if Father and God were looking for the person who, refusing to be a sycophant, would "Man up" to Sun Myung Moon and explain the flaw of the boat..... and wondered if, instead of anger, Sun Myung Moon would beam and smile and say, "Finally!...."

14 years later I was at an "Ocean Church Festival" sponsored by Unification Church in New Jersey. They had four different sizes of the "Good Go" boats on display and a Japanese brother started giving me the spill, at first not realizing that I was a church member. He was telling me what a great boat, I should buy one, etc., etc. I asked him how many they had sold last year. He was shocked that someone would ask him that.

"Hundreds," he said, defensively.

"No, come on, really!"

"Oh, actually three."

"Three boats last year?"

"Yes"

"I thought that they were going to get rid of the "nose" on the boat. Its really surprising to see it still there after 14 years. "

His eyes opened wide, he realized now that I was definitely a church member.

"But Father likes it that way..." .

Anyway, I spent almost two years with Ocean Church and then I got a phone call one day and 48 hours later I was in New York and would start traveling all around the world on a new mission.