

## My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 22

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July 15, 2021



Punta Del Este, Uruguay

As I wrote earlier, during my afternoon prayer in the days immediately prior to meeting my spiritual mother, I felt and obeyed a strong spiritual push to leave my room and walk out of the house, as though I was Abraham abandoning his home on God's command. Truly, I did not know if God was going to tell me to keep walking. Then, as I stood outside, waiting, the feeling would dissipate. The moment I walked out from my home under compulsion, and greeted Felice Hart with her bucket of carnations, I could understand the working of the spirit world. As I made my travel plans to meet True Father in South America, I felt the same push to abandon my life, to leave everything and everyone behind. When I met True Father, I was determined to place my family and myself entirely in his hands. I set prayer conditions and put my heart in order. Each morning, in order to kneel in prayer, I died to myself and all that I loved. When I finished and stood, I felt reborn and confident in the love and care of my Heavenly Parent. Every morning was death and rebirth.

I flew first to New York and joined with my fellow attorneys flying to Montevideo, through Buenos Aires. I don't recall much of the flight, as I was preoccupied with my own internal reckoning. As I reflect back, I have no doubt that each of us dealt with some degree of apprehension as we prepared to meet True Father. Despite that, a comfortable sense of reunion and pleasure in each other's company settled among us.

Soon after we arrived at the Victoria Plaza Hotel, True Father gathered us in his apartment and emphasized to us the providential importance of his upcoming speech to the leading political and judicial leaders of Uruguay. At the time, True Mother was in Rome, Italy on her worldwide speaking tour. Father got her on the phone and initiated a "singing competition" between the lawyers and the Italian members with Mother. I had sung "Doki no Sakura" countless times before a wide array of audiences and felt confident I could represent our side well. I volunteered, and stood, dedicating the song to Mr. Kamiyama and MFT members. Suddenly, as I started to sing, I became self-conscious, my hands sweat, my heart raced, my voice cracked, and all of the anxiety I had been feeling over the last months came to the surface in a rush. I humiliated myself, and worse, Father looked very displeased. He hated to lose in any competition. I realized that the next few days would require more spiritual preparation, poise, and self-composure as I engaged with True Father. Though painful, the experience reminded me not to lose my center in Father's presence.

The next morning we gathered and True Father called on each of the attorneys to report on the nature of their activities and the law they practiced. When Father called on me, this time I had prepared well. I explained to Father the cases I had litigated and the little work I had done with Golden Gate Seafood. I then disclosed my personal situation. I reported to Father that I had left my blessing and married outside of the church. I told Father I was sorry that I had not been faithful. As my words were translated, I felt alone in the room with True Father as he read my spirit. Looking down and listening intently during the entire exchange, Father acknowledged my report and said nothing more. I sat down.

That afternoon, Father decided he would take us all fishing in the Rio de la Plata. A lottery system was organized by Mr. Joo to determine which of us would fish on Father's boat. I was among the few selected. We drove down the coast to Punta del Este and put out to sea. I felt deeply connected to True Father throughout the experience. As Father fished, I helped the deckhand with the anchor and other chores, only to discover he was not a member but assigned to the boat by the Uruguayan government as a pilot, to ensure we respected international boundaries. Like myself, he came from a military family. Drawn to him, I was determined to be a good witness on behalf of our movement. On the water, I thrive, I am in my element. He did not feel comfortable on the boat and even expressed repulsion for the silt that coated the anchor chain as we pulled it up. Not sharing his disgust, I threw myself into being a deckhand with a joyful spirit. We only stayed out for two hours but by the end, I had opened the deckhand's reluctant heart.

That evening, we had the banquet for the dignitaries and True Father spoke. He initially gave his prepared remarks and then, feeling a warm acceptance, began to speak extemporaneously, moving among the assembled guests. I had been assigned a seat near the podium and True Father was energetically walking back and forth in front of me. As he was speaking, he turned and stopped and rapped the top of my head with his knuckles, very deliberately, three times. I had been spanked by the Messiah. I felt spiritually lighter, liberated, and filled with joy.

The evening event ended and we all headed back up to True Father's apartment around 11:00 p.m. Father's words had been enthusiastically received and the banquet had been a great success. Mr. Joo motioned me to sit at the table, directly on True Father's left. Father began speaking to us and continued all night. At around 3:00 a.m., I looked around and everyone was exhausted and deeply asleep, even Mr. Joo had his head down in his arms on the table. Now, this moment seems like a dream, but I felt completely alive and Father turned to me, and in English, began speaking to me about living for the sake of others. He then said, "You must love your wife! You must get the Blessing!" And continued to speak to me about the eternal significance of the Blessing. I did not know how I could fulfill Father's command, but I was absolutely determined to make it happen.

I cannot recall the sequence of all the events, but I believe the speech was on a Saturday evening. We rested for an hour and then met again right before 5:00 a.m. in True Father's apartment for pledge service on Sunday morning. Father entered the room and looked as though he had not slept at all. He bowed before his empty chair, then sat. We then bowed three times and recited the Family Pledge. I remembered thinking at the time, I didn't know that the words could be spoken so quickly in such a rush but with such passion. Afterwards, Father spoke to us about the significance of our victory the night before, and how the 33 of us represented the nations of South America and the years in the life of Jesus, how we had liberated the heart of Jesus by obeying True Father, leaving our busy lives, and coming to Uruguay at his request. As Father spoke, and as I write, I feel my remaining awake with Father that night carried a redemptive significance not only for myself, but for Christianity, and for the conditions Heaven desired for that time period.

My personal course had been set by True Father. I returned home, with a renewed determination to restore my wife and family, but - considering the restrictions surrounding the Marriage Blessing at that time - I had no idea how Father's directions would come to pass.