

*Farley Jones,
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I first met Father in February 1969 in San Francisco. At the time I was working in the Berkeley center, where I had moved in November 1967 at the request of Young Oon Kim. That February, Miss Kim had come to California a few days before Father's arrival, both to welcome him and to prepare us.

Meeting with the Berkeley members beforehand, Miss Kim described the daunting challenges that Father faced. While I do not recall specifics, her description led me to think that I was about to meet a downtrodden Messiah, inescapably rendered that way by the mountains of difficulties and providential responsibilities he faced.

But a downtrodden Messiah is not who I met. Through Miss Kim I had learned of his challenges, but in Father I encountered courage. Sitting on a chair in the San Francisco Center shortly after his arrival, shoes off, one leg pulled up under him, his torso fit, his smiling face radiant, he simply exuded strength and light. One could have no idea of his burdens.

My first impression of Father, then, was that he was a man of courage. When I encounter him now, in his 90th year, hearing of his plans and catching his spirit, I see that nothing has changed.

My next encounter with Father in the United States was almost three years later, in December of 1971 in Washington, D.C., Two years earlier, in December of 1969, I had been asked to serve as the president of the young American movement. By the time I again met Father it was not only Father being profoundly challenged, it was also me.

I had become president at age 26, two-and-a-half years after joining our church. In many ways I was far too immature and inexperienced

for such a role. Under the stresses of that mission, I soon lost my vision and enthusiasm, as well as any sense of God's presence in my life. I felt no confidence in my ability to lead and felt I had little to offer the membership. It was a dark time.

When Father arrived, the only thing I could think of to do was to offer my resignation. With this in mind, I sought an appointment with him through Mrs. Won Pok Choi. Ultimately, I was told I could meet him in his bedroom at Upshur House. When Betsy and I walked into the bedroom, True Parents were seated on their bed and indicated we should take a seat on the floor. We did, and I thought it was in that appropriate arrangement — True Parents above on the bed and we below on the floor — that any discussion would ensue.

But Father suddenly got up from the bed, came to where we were sitting and sat on the floor with me and my wife. It was a gesture that touched me deeply. All five of us, True Parents, Mrs. Won Pok Choi, Betsy and I, sat there for perhaps 20 minutes with Father listening to me, encouraging me and advising me. I was much strengthened and inspired, then and thereafter. I subsequently accompanied Father and Mother during Father's seven-city tour, during which time Father continued to extend his support and love to this spiritual novice.

But growth and healing come slowly. With Father's departure from the United States in March 1972, I was still not sufficiently mature to sustain a leadership role. Thus, while I was active and did significant things during my remaining time as president, I continued to encounter darkness, depression, and confusion.

Over the years, however, I somehow stayed on the path, often pulled back to it by Father's very humble gesture and by the thought in my heart, "Because you were so caring as to sit on the floor with me...."

I am eternally grateful to True Parents for their love and devotion, to my wife and others who also walk this path, and to God whose grace sustains us all.