

Interpreting for True Parents in in South and Central America during the 1990s [Part 3]

Interview of Alejandro de Souza
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Father hard at work interacting with the audience during an Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace conference

I was so blessed. I don't deserve the blessings I received from True Parents. But also, while in São Paulo, they gave me a Korean name. I am Alejandro [pronounced Al-e-han-dro]. They "baptized" me Han Do-rae. And Mother looked so happy, as if I were one of their family, one of the Han clan! She was always so nice to me. Of course, she would scold me if I did something wrong! I felt she was always a natural true mother, and I know this treatment is not because of me, or my character. I felt, and I later learned, that I represented Latin America. They wanted to give all their love and concern to Latin America, but they could not. So they gave it to me. But I had to be clear that it was not for me or because of me but was a blessing for all of Latin America. They were always concerned about everybody. And even in Father's prayers; I was amazed how the staff members' names were in his prayers. I felt so deeply touched by their sincere concern and love.

I am sure I have seen an instance of Father mentioning you by name -- perhaps it was in one such prayer.

I know my name is in the volumes of his sermons, because sometimes he would speak to me and of course it was recorded. But a long time passed before all that he said and did was recorded, before everybody came and found Father was directing a new providence in South America. A long time passed without recording what he did and said there. Days and days on the boats. I wished I could have spent more time with Mother. But they would go in separate boats, for a long time. Father was so serious setting the conditions -- for Latin America, the Americas and for the world.

Can you say something about these conditions? Was it fishing for many days in a row?

Yes. That is like torture. To be on the river for more than three days is torture. It is not fishing for pleasure. I wished I could go with Mother on her boat, because she was always nice and kind to me. But he would not have liked that. Because he's not just fishing; he is not enjoying himself. And I am not there to enjoy myself; I am there to attend Father during his conditions and endure the same suffering and make the same effort he has to make. I participated in establishing the conditions. We were uniting with Father to establish conditions for the Americas and the world.

Are there particular situations or stories you could share about True Parents?

I want to mention how Father relates with people. We met hundreds of people and I forgot who they were. But Father remembered very clearly. One person Father met for three minutes, years earlier, had mentioned to Father that his wife was sick and in the hospital. On meeting him again, Father said, "Oh, the mayor of Corumbá! How are you? How is your wife? She was in the hospital then..." That amazed me because we met thousands of people, and I interpreted for him in meetings with hundreds of people and I couldn't remember who they were. This was because I was meeting them horizontally. I did my job and interpreted for someone he met, but later I couldn't remember who he was, much less that his wife had been hospitalized.

I saw that God is living with Father, and Father is living with God. A simple meeting with someone is not held externally or horizontally. Father is always totally focused on fulfilling God's will, and he has to find people to work with him. So whenever he meets someone, he prays with God's providence in mind, so he registers people like a computer. When he meets people, he is totally centered on God and on what God needs, thinking, "What can this man do for God in the future?" I have quite a good memory, but I couldn't remember people. And Father was about eighty years old. That amazed me.



Alejandro de Souza's painstaking effort to learn Korean dramatically affected the course of his life. Here, he interprets for True Parents and Ecuadorian President Sixto Durán Ballén (1992–1996).

Also, if you do not have authentic care and concern for others, you will not remember them. So this shows Father's true love and true concern for people. Even though members may think Father is distant, that is not Father's heart. Father is not distant and unconcerned. He is always thinking about those who are with him while he conducts the providence. Even the least thing you do for him, he is so grateful. That happened many times. There is no way you can mistrust or doubt who True Parents are.

At one point, Father went on a special tour to meet the presidents of Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay... Afterward, when we went fishing in Corrientes, in Argentina, the pilot of the boat was a very simple man, with a very low intellectual level, but Father started witnessing to him with the same respect and with the same words he had spoken to the presidents. He expressed the same heart while witnessing to that simple boy as he had expressed while witnessing to nations' presidents the previous week.

Another time, Father spent one whole day sitting and talking with a Korean medical doctor. This man had been in Africa and the Amazon to work with the natives. He was a very strong Christian, and Father talked to him all day about God. Father was calling him Seonsaeng nim, treating him as if he were a teacher, speaking to him in polite language. They were sitting there, and after a couple of hours I saw they were still there, so I sat at a distance, just to see him talking to this other man -- for hours, in a very respectful way, talking about God, never talking about the Christian church. This went on for hours, from morning to the middle of the afternoon with this man, and nobody was around. Father will never think, Oh, everybody is out doing something, I will go and take a nap. Never.

Please tell the story of the airplane.

The airplane! We had been traveling by commercial plane. It was hard. Hot weather, always crowded... Including True Parents, there were around twelve people, plus luggage. The leaders would repeatedly tell Father he needed a private plane.

Father would always say no. But sometimes he agreed to travel shorter distances in a small airplane. There was one such occasion. It was a very small plane. It had only five seats -- the pilot and co-pilot, True Parents and me. Me, because I was the interpreter. The regional or national leader should have been there to attend True Parents, but because there were only three seats they needed a seat for the interpreter in case True Parents had to talk to the pilot, or if something happened.



A small plane that True Parents used in South America

On the way, we saw a storm coming up. The pilots had not been informed of that, even if it had been forecast. We saw this black, electric storm directly in front of us. No way to avoid it; we went in. And the plane began to go up and down, and shake in such a terrible way that you would think it would break up at any time. The shaking broke open the doors to the luggage compartment, and luggage was falling out and hitting True Parents -- all of us -- on the head and body. True Parents were also hitting their head and body on the wall of the plane.

We came out of that. I don't know how long it lasted, but it was like eternity. I saw death so near. But I felt calm because True Parents were there.

When we came out of the storm, the pilot was completely pale. And he said, look up there! We looked up and saw what we had come through. It was so scary. But we still had a long way to go to Montevideo. We had to make a stop, so we landed at a small airport in the countryside. There was just one man to open the gates in the morning and close them at night. We landed and everything was calm.

Mother did not feel like getting back on the plane. I felt sorry for her. I had to go to the restroom and Father came in after me.

He asked me, "Were you afraid?"

I said, "No. No. I was not scared, because you were there, Father. If you had not been there I would have died of a heart attack."

"Oh, so you have a lot of sins!" Father replied [jokingly].

Afterwards, as we came out of the terminal, Father said to Mother, "Don't worry; let's keep going."

And after a little while, Mother was okay.

Please can you give a final reflection, looking back?

True Parents left Latin America around 2000. After that, they didn't come so often or stay long. I thought I wouldn't see them anymore. It took me more than a year to get used to not seeing True Parents from morning to night. I was empty, totally empty. But later I came to Korea with the Uruguayan VIPs, and we went to have breakfast with True Parents. It was the time of True Parents' second Holy Wedding [February 2003]. Mother asked me if I would like to come with them to Hawaii, so I went with them and with some True Family members.

After they left South America, some legal troubles and complications came to Jardim. I was so sorry, because I had seen Father and Mother suffer there a lot. A lot. They were happy there but their life was one of establishing conditions to develop the providence and go to another level. They devoted themselves totally to the conditions they made. I saw them suffering so much through the effort they made that I felt so sorry that there were problems in Jardim. So, when I went with them to Hawaii I could not hold back my tears. "I am sorry Father that you suffered so much there, invested so much there, and now it's in difficulty."

He surprised me, because he said, "When I went to Jardim, we had thirty-thousand blessed couples. When I came out of South America, we had millions of blessed couples. What I do does not fail."

Of course he was concerned about the property and the situations that had arisen. But his main purpose in going to South America had not been to develop external projects. He was there to advance God's providence.