

Chuck Frumin: UTS made me a fisher of men

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Frumin family reunion in Kona, Hawaii

“And I will make you fishers of men”: The watery odyssey of Chuck Frumin

From the Atlantic to the Pacific and finally to the palm-lined shores of paradise, Chuck Frumin, UTS class of '80, has spent a good part of his life on the water.

A native of California, Frumin was born in Whittier, but grew up a stone's throw from the pounding waves of Carlsbad, CA where he often surfed. After graduating from the University of California in Santa Barbara where he received his undergraduate degree in Film Studies, Frumin joined the Unification Church in 1975. After two years of supporting church work through fundraising activities, Chuck was admitted into the MRE program at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS).



“Going to UTS was an incredible eye-opener for me,” says Frumin. Growing up Jewish, Chuck admits his family orientation was pretty secular. They celebrated the traditional Jewish holidays, but Frumin says his family was not particularly religious. Besides studying theology, Chuck had his first serious exposure to the Bible and learned about Christianity while at UTS. Two years of delving into both the Old and New Testament, learning church history and having the opportunity to bond with his fellow seminarians was a memorable experience for him.

Studying at UTS where the professors themselves were from a variety of faiths, was a great opportunity to get a unique perspective on other religious orientations. “It was a real interfaith experience; the professors taught from their own perspective, but it actually made our faith stronger.” Frumin says he especially benefitted from Dr. Thomas Boslooper's teachings on the New Testament. “His classes had the most lasting impact for my understanding of the Bible.” Chuck found the in-depth study of the scriptures particularly helpful when he was called on later in his life to deliver sermons on a regular basis.

Chuck's two years of study at UTS could not fully prepare him for what came next. On October 1,

1980 Rev. Moon, the founder of UTS, called all the seminary graduates together in Gloucester, MA and initiated Ocean Church. Twenty-four graduates were chosen to start Ocean Church centers in coastal areas of the United States. Chuck ended up in Port Serrano, Florida – a small town on the Florida coast that was well-known as a good place for sport fishing.

“I have always loved the ocean, but being on a boat is very different than surfing,” states Chuck. Like many other seminarians, Frumin experienced hands-on training through tuna fishing in the waters off of Gloucester, MA. “It was an extremely challenging experience; we’d be up by 4:00 am and then fish all day. Everyone was seasick – it took me a while to overcome that; we usually didn’t get back to the dock until sunset.” Frumin admits, “It was exhausting. And then we would get up the next morning and do it all over again.”

As Frumin recalls, “The Seminary taught us nothing about the ocean; we weren’t prepared to be boat captains, but in our Ocean Church centers we were expected to get a boat, become a boat captain and learn about fish and fishing. “And the expectation was that it was fishing during the day, and teaching scripture at the center at night.” Fishers of men.

In 1983 Frumin returned to California, this time in the San Diego area to establish an Ocean Church center near Point Loma. “The focus wasn’t just fishing for fishing’s sake, but to use the boat to serve the community.” Chuck worked closely with underprivileged kids in the local neighborhoods and partnered with a variety of non-profit organizations to give children an opportunity to be on a boat and to learn to fish. One of the highlights of the many years he spent in San Diego was that of being honored with a Leadership Award by a local TV station for his service work with the children in the community.

In 1991 Frumin was asked to go to Kona, Hawai’i. He had a captain’s license and was tasked with being the captain for a boat called the Renegade which was run as a commercial charter boat. Rev. Moon told Chuck, “You fish during the day, but in the evenings you need to teach people about God and the Divine Principle.” A tall order, but Captain Chuck rose to the challenge. In addition to this charter boat business Chuck also was involved in the sale of fish to local restaurants through True World Foods, one of the largest wholesale distributors of fresh and frozen seafood in the world.



Award Winner
Charles Frumin is being presented with a Leadership Award from KGTV television reporter Margaret Radford in recognition of the fishing trips he offers less fortunate children aboard his 28-foot skiff, *One Hope 104*.
KGTV presents weekly leadership awards to San Diego-area citizens who take a leading role in enhancing relations within the community.
Standing with Frumin and Radford are (left to right) Andrea Bussey, Nathan Pope and Jamison Jackson, all from the St. Vincent de Paul Joan Kroc Center, whom Frumin took fishing near Point Loma Sept. 20. Also on the trip, but not pictured, were Antonio Dais and Valerie Pope.
Frumin, who owns and operates a wholesale flower business in San Diego, has been taking children on fishing trips for the last four to five years.
“I’m always looking for non-profit groups with kids,” he said. “I generally try to get kids who have never been on a boat before.”

In 2000 Chuck was appointed to become the pastor of the local Unification Church in Kona. “Hawai’i is a unique place; there is a mix of people from all over the world here. Folks are very open minded and friendly; it is truly a big melting pot.” In addition to giving sermons on Sunday, Chuck takes pride in organizing an annual interfaith Thanksgiving concert in which many other churches participate. “We have wonderful friends from a variety of local denominations and work closely with our contacts of all different faiths.” Many of his contacts have enjoyed participating in the concert as well as the interfaith prayer breakfasts he has helped organize.

Frumin’s appreciation of his island home is very apparent. He says, “Hawai’i (the Big Island,) is not only the largest Hawaiian Island, but all things that grow here seem to grow large including the leaves, flowers and fruit. And the fish! Rev. Moon once said that that God created the Hawaiian Islands to show humans how much he loved them.”

Reflecting on his experience with fishing, Chuck says, “Going out on the ocean is a great way to have a relationship with God; you can feel God

more easily in that environment. Most ministers are praying in a beautiful church or a cathedral, but when you are on the sea you feel the greatness of God because the ocean is so huge and so is God. There is no land in sight, only the water and the clouds. Moses and Jesus went into the mountains to pray, but if you want to experience the greatness of God go to the ocean.”

Just as Jesus called his disciples to be fishers of men, Chuck sees a strong connection between fishing and witnessing to one’s faith. “Catching fish is similar to “catching” people for God. You need to know fish and their habits; how do you win people to God? You really need to understand people, where they are at and where they are coming from.”

Chuck says that catching a blue fin tuna was the most interesting challenge he has ever experienced; he understands that beyond symbolism, there is correlation between the victory of landing a giant tuna and being victorious in other areas of one’s life. In re-calling a “big fish story” of landing a giant blue fin tuna in Gloucester he muses about how difficult it was. “Every day we were out on the boat; week after week with no result. You really have to learn patience or you can’t succeed.” He recounts a summer day when the crew was chumming the water (tossing in bits of fish) and they could see giant tuna circling closer and

closer under the boat. “Tuna are smart – they are not easy to catch. Just like in life when you really want to gain a victory, you ask for God’s help. It’s no different when you are fishing.” The giant tuna in question was eventually landed after a long struggle; when the fish finally ceded the battle Chuck recalls the sense of victory was tremendous. He was inspired to pen a song about the experience entitled, “Victory at Sea” – a verse from the tune follows.

*Rolling on the ocean, gliding thru the waves,
Heading to the fishing ground, this will be the day.
I'll take this ocean challenge which God has given me.
And win this fight for everyone and bring the victory.*

Although Rev. Frumin hung up his surf board long ago, he still enjoys body boarding and snorkeling in the waters off of Kona. He follows international surfing competitions that take place all over the world culminating on the island of Oahu’s North Shore. He has little time for fishing these days, but Frumin affirms, “Being on the water is an incredible adventure and it is a great way to develop a relationship with God, too.”

Chuck Frumin lives in Kona, Hawai’i with his wife, Mayumi. They are the parents of two sons and a daughter who live on the mainland.