

The Trial of answering negative publicity about True Father

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One key trial point for me in my church journey was answering the negative publicity about True Father. I was off 5 years of national MFT, which I had survived, and several months of IOWC, which I left to see if I could keep my fiancé from leaving the church.

I couldn't, and so I was in New York church, trying to digest all that had happened. I'd been fundraising for years before I saw Father the second time, when he was matching me. So there was a lot I didn't know about him or Mother. A couple of workshops at the World Mission Center helped that some, but

I hadn't been to Belvedere that often.

I'd been taking abuse about Father for years, from people claiming he was a false prophet or just living high on the money we were raising. Was he a power hungry leader? What kind of leader was he? So I went with an eye to find out: is he saying "Look at what I can do that no one else can! You will never be like me, bow down!"; or was he saying "Here's what I did, and here's how I did it. Now it's your turn. Go ahead!"

Though Father often spoke of what he had accomplished, that no one else had ever done, he was clearly saying "Here's what I did; now it's your turn. You can do it!"

I think part of being a true leader is that if we follow their example, live the way they do, the world will be a better place for it.

There were some brothers and sisters, a certain element, who saw Father as a high and holy king, a superman who had some special magic that we could only hope to hold on to. Again, nothing strictly wrong with seeing Father as high up and us as lower, but thinking he never made mistakes or did everything perfectly every time was erroneous. I think it comes from a couple of millenia of believing Jesus was walking God and not man.

I remember some members debating "Does Father ever make mistakes?" the idea being that perfect people don't. The one instance held up was when Father was showing seminary students how to weave nets to catch carp, he made a mistake and had to unravel and start over again.

More recently, one brother who worked as security at East Garden said Father's was was to charge right into a new project, be it tuna fishing, boat building or what have you. He'd make a lot of mistakes, learn from them, and then quickly figure out the best way to do it.

But I think it's when we try to tackle our own responsibilities that Father becomes more human. Rather than see someone who automatically has God's perspective on everything, and knows just what to do, it's more like a life of desperately trying everything you know how to do, without knowing at all, and then praying desperately for guidance. Then trying not to erupt when brothers and sisters or contacts give you

grief.

When Father said "I never prayed from weakness," a phrase we often heard repeated, the next thing he said was "When I felt myself wanting to ask God for help, I stopped myself." It's not that he never felt like crying or begging for help - he did - he just never gave in to it.

In one talk, he said (this may not be exact) "This life is so difficult there will be times when you want to curse yourself, curse God and die." He wasn't just joking, he'd been in that place and knew the desire to curse God and die very well. He just never gave in to it.

So he wasn't a superman, and he didn't skim above all the world's temptations and difficulties. He was at times stewed in temptation, despair and futility, in a place where everyone who'd been there before had been defeated. So we aren't bad people if we've experienced those things ourselves.

I have certainly felt the desire to curse God, curse myself, curl up and die. Trudging through a small Southern town on a hot, humid afternoon, tired, sweaty and worn out from hearing negative abusive comments being delivered with a smile, being persecuted in the name of Jesus so many times that I didn't want to hear his name anymore. Looking forward to reporting my low result and receiving a cold Big Mac and my blitzing area until 11, when we drove to a highway rest area to spend the night sleeping on a concrete picnic table with moths fluttering around the bright yellow light, woken by passing trucks all night long.

I've long since digested that. Father lived through much worse, and so have many people who have no other choices in life. For me, this was temporary and I knew it. A stage. But how could I talk to someone who worked all day only to be yelled at for not producing more, ate a hard crust and slept on a piece of pavement, day after day, year after year?

Plus, I knew I was passing through the servant of servant and servant stage, on the way hopefully to adopted child and true child. In the servant stage, you get judged on how well you do your job, what you produce, and you can get fired if you mess up. You don't expect anyone to understand you or look out for you at that level.

Adopted children try to toe the line in their new family, aware that they've been taken in, even though they came from a different background. So they're trying to act right, afraid to just be themselves because they don't trust themselves to act right and they're not sure they'll be accepted.

I see this in several Christian churches I've attended, when the singers are constantly limiting their gestures and expressions to small, prayerful gestures, careful not to show too much personality. The same "I am no one before you", "humble turds before the Great Lord expression seen so many times.

But true children are free to express themselves. One thing I loved about Oakland was how guests and new members were cheered for expressing themselves, no matter how corny it may have been. It was a real sense of rejoicing at being children of God. I could not have joined The Church, where white shirts and ties and serious attitudes prevailed.