



## Dr. Michael Balcomb speaks to the Blessed Family Department Workshop

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**G**ood afternoon everybody. Yes, as Fumiko said, we do feel a little unworthy to be here. There is a funny American expression, “to feel like a lion in the den of Daniels!” Why? Because all of you are doing better than us in many ways.

I would like to start off by sharing with an encounter I had with True Mother a few years ago. We had just finished celebrating True Parents’ Day in Hawaii. It was beautiful, so informal and familial. In Hawaii everybody dresses casually most of the time, with a Hawaiian shirt blue jeans. We had a very happy Holy Day Ceremony. There were many young people present and they sung joyfully for Mother, and everything was really great.

However, when you are a leader, even if you have just had a really great experience with True Parents, then (at least in my case) there is a little part of you that can’t relax and is thinking, “Well, let’s leave right now, before we make any mistake or get any new responsibility!” In that frame of mind, I was all ready to go to the airport, but the next morning, at four am, someone came to tell me “Don’t leave! True Mother is inviting you for the breakfast.”

Of course, to be invited by True Parents for breakfast is a great thing. I know that many of you, perhaps most of you haven’t had that chance. Has anyone? Do you know what True Mother likes for breakfast; in case she comes to your house? She likes coffee. Do you know how she likes to drink it? Plain and black. Sugar? No, no sugar. Just like me!

We were sitting at breakfast, round the table, just like this, about six of us, myself, two other brothers and Won Ju, Sun Jin Nim, and True Mother. The meal was winding down and True Mother suddenly turned to me and said something like “You know, I really don’t know you!”

Wow. That was a shock. I wondered to myself, “Oh no, is this like the time Jesus said to the cursed, “I don’t really know you!” What did I do?” I think Mother must have sensed my distress, because she quickly said, “I mean, I want to know more about

you. Why did you join this church, tell me about yourself. I don’t know you so well. I want you guys to introduce yourselves. You go first!”

So I went first and I explained how I joined the church. I was 19 years old and on vacation in California when I first studied the Principle. On Easter Sunday I heard the conclusion that the Messiah was on earth and my life was turned upside down.

Just one problem: I misheard Father’s name, I didn’t pay so much attention, I thought he was an Indian mystic called “Ramun” instead of “Rev. Moon” and that he would wear a saffron robe and have a long straggling white beard!” As I was telling this to Mother, she thought it was quite funny. She told me, “Ramun! How long did it take you to get the name right?”

Everyone laughed together. It was a very relaxed moment. But then, she took a pause and leaned over and looked me right in the eyes, like this, and she told me: “I noticed you haven’t told me anything about your family?”

“Yes, Mother, you are right,” I said. “I haven’t, Mother. Because I am sorry to say the truth. You made me the President of the Family Federation which has the mission to spread the Blessing of God and True Parents, but the truth is, we couldn’t do it well enough even in our own family. You see, Mother, we have five wonderful, beautiful adult children. But we haven’t been able to find matches for even one them. Some of them told us that they don’t want the Blessing anymore.”

“I know how important this is,” I said, “And as a matter of fact, as I am sharing this frankly with you, Mother, this is a good moment for me to say that I feel I’m quite unqualified to be President of the American Church You probably need someone who is victorious in this very elementary matter.”

You know, I was just pouring out my heart to Mother about this difficulty, this burden on my soul. But Mother said so lovingly, “I already knew it; but I want to tell you to trust God. God has a plan. God had a plan for your children even before they were born.”

Yes, that's indeed what the scripture says in the Psalms, "I knew you before you were born." Yes, God knows us. He knows our children. And He has a plan for us, and a plan for them. And as Orlande said earlier, sometimes it is plan A, or plan B, and personally I feel God may have used up most of the letters when he thinks of me! But the most important thing is that God has a plan. We should trust in that. In this way True Mother reassured me, but she was also gently remonstrating with me to have more faith. Don't we all need that reassurance? That God has a plan?

Our Heavenly Parent has a plan and nothing we might do, or will ever do can prevent God from fulfilling His plan. And that plan is love. Again, according to the scriptures, "to be prosperous and to bring us happiness and joy and victory." Any parent wants that for his or her children, and how much more our Heavenly Parent wants that for us and for our children, and in fact for all the children of the world!

Our True Parents want that too. At that time, True Mother hadn't blessed her two youngest children. She made a real effort to encourage them to bring their long-time partners to be blessed. And my predecessor Jack Corley, who helped that to happen, told me how she made an amazing effort to find the way to teach these young men and women about the love of God, and why it was so important for them to receive the blessing. And they did. That was a really great example for us.

I'm asking you now to close your eyes for a random survey. Only Orlande is allowed to keep her eyes open! I ask you, with your eyes now closed, if you have a child or a sibling or a relative who is in need of the blessing of God but it doesn't seem to be coming to them in the traditional way, or the way you thought it would, can you raise your hand? If there is someone in your life who needs love and blessing right now but you just don't know how to help?

Thank you. That is everyone. I want to tell you that that the blessing is coming. And that God sees that difficult situation and He has already permitted and promised that He will solve that problem in His time, and it's coming. A few years later, we can see this blessing now coming to reality in our family. God is leading our children to find wonderful partners and we are proud of them, and sorry for the times we were so impatient, perhaps thinking more of ourselves more than them.

That was a long introduction! But I wanted to share with you candidly my vulnerability, my weaknesses, and how God and True Parents intervened in my life in this matter of sharing and having faith for the Blessing

Yesterday evening I was asking God what shall I talk about to this amazing group of people, working so hard for the Blessing? Then True Father appeared to me in a dream this morning and he told me, "Tell them how I decided that the blessing would be the means of salvation!"

How did Father decide that? Do you know? That's a surprising question. He's my Father, but I told him in the dream "How can I tell them that? I don't know myself!" "So why don't you find out!" Father retorted. But actually, when I woke up, I realized that in fact I already knew. And that's what I want to share with you a little bit. I think it is really important, especially for this group, to understand where did the blessing come from, in the beginning?

Now of course we already all know Father was blessed in 1960 with True Mother. For a long time, I thought that by then Father was perfectly mature and complete, and that he had to raise up True Mother, who was so young, and that was all there was to know about that.

But I was wrong.

Fumiko and I were reading in the Cheon Seong Gyong a couple of days ago when a very surprising statement by True Father caught my eye. He said, "at the time of the Holy Blessing in 1960 I myself was still living within the realm of Satan's dominion." I had to take a second look. "I myself was within the realm of Satan's dominion?"

I thought to myself, "Father how could you say that? Already you were victorious, right? You met Jesus, you went through all the hardships of Hung Nam, you went through those years of suffering, you discovered the Principle and you were a long way along your path. You were with God!"

But there it was on the page in black and white "I was still in the realm of Satan's dominion!" Father went on to say, "and together with True Mother I passed through the seven years of trial and overcoming until we could finally celebrate God's Day in 1968."

Reflecting about this, I think until True Mother really began to provide more education on this point, I have always held what I now recognize was a very chauvinist view of True Parents, thinking "Father is the perfect Son of God, he comes and he fulfils his mission and then he kind of picks up a woman, and he has children and grandchildren, and after a period of time he announces, okay, we did it together. But really, it is all him."

But it is nothing like that. Actually it can't be like that. Because the dream of God, the vision of God is a true family, where the husband and the wife are completely and totally equal in love and in everything else. There cannot be one without the other. If you don't have that personal experience and if the world doesn't have that model, then indeed that statement of Father is true, "I was still in the realm of Satan's dominion!"

Why? Because if even Father doesn't have his ideal partner, the person that compliments him, he can never become the perfected True Father." Later on Father often used to remind us that without children, even God the Heavenly Parent cannot actually be the Heavenly Parent. It's only the children who make the parent the parent.

My oldest daughter always used to remind me of this me on Father's Day each year, with a big smile. "Dad, I'm the one who made you a father" Yes, that is true, so, you know, we, the children are in fact the ones who make our Heavenly Parent a parent. And our blessed families are the ones who can make the True Parents, True Parents.

Orlande asked me to talk about the value of the Blessed families. And I really didn't know what to say. But what I feel God wanted to say is that the blessed families are the ones who make the True Parents the True Parents and who make the Heavenly Parent the Heavenly Parent. And without that, God's long and torturous nightmare of not being able to find his children will continue. So, to be the ones, the first ones who understand the heart of God the Heavenly Parent and who make God the Heavenly Parent by our filial response .... that's something that will never be forgotten.

And I am sure that Father never taught us anything just as a theologian or simply as a spiritual teacher of the mind. It all came from the experience of the heart, from his own self-realization along the road. Father wouldn't say anything unless he had first experienced it himself.

And so that also must be true about the experience of the Blessing and being saved by the Blessing and becoming a parent. Father knew this was the answer because he himself felt saved by the blessing! Father didn't hold back from telling us this, and I'm glad he didn't hold back, that he could express himself so candidly and so completely.

I really want to urge you, if you haven't done so, to really dig into these very special passages where Father and Mother talk about the difficult course that they went, and how they overcame together. From our own experience as parents, we have come to know that the most comforting and joyful thing we can have is when our children understand who we really are, and what we went through to be their parents. And I am sure that this is completely true for our True Parents as well.

And what about for our Heavenly Parent? A few years ago, actually not such a long time after this experience with True Mother, God dramatically showed me his heart of longing to find his children. At the time I was in a difficult place spiritually. In fact, I didn't know quite what to do. I had been President of the USA church for a year. But I felt that our church seemed stuck in a rut. Perhaps it was just me stuck in the rut, but anyway I suddenly felt a strong internal push that we needed to go back to the beginning, to the roots, and our Father's first footsteps in America.

So we decided to do a pilgrimage to all the Holy Grounds of America. And that's not an easy task. Father visited 48 states and made a total of 55 holy grounds in just in 42 days. It was a mad, crazy chase across America back in 1965, without GPS or Google maps. He visited every single continental state to plant a Holy Ground. We felt we should do the same.

In retracing that course over the next 6 weeks I discovered a lot about myself. I found that that even on such a meaningful and substantial pilgrimage, the real pilgrimage is always inside your own mind. As we traveled America, I noticed very clearly that when I was close to Father and when I was close to God, each Holy Ground was a real encounter with the Divine. There was always a message waiting for me there. But when I lost that vision and started to think only about myself, then all I saw at the Holy Ground was a tree in the ground. Indeed, sometimes just the ground, because even the tree had been taken away! The Holy Ground was the same, but I was different. I was either really close to God or I was not close.

Before we set off on the journey True Mother gave me some advice. She said, as you travel round America, don't just think about the holy grounds. Think of those who helped make them. I want you to pay attention to the previous Presidents of the American Church. I would really like to know how they are doing, how are their families, how are their children?"

And so I said, "Okay Mother, I will find out." But it wasn't particularly happy finding this out. What I discovered was that in quite many cases the lives of the previous church presidents (I was the 14th) had not always gone so happily. Some went to the spirit world, some were alive, some were still close to the movement and some were very far away.

For example, the very first American president of the American Church never was blessed and finally he just disappeared. For almost 50 years he was invisible. We found him though, we found him still alive, in the North California Bay area, and of course an old man, and all alone. He was one of the people who travelled around with Father, drove him around with the car, way back in the beginning. What a special person he must be to God, and yet he could not stay in our movement and we could not find a place for him.

We told him about the Holy Ground pilgrimage we were about to undertake and we asked him, "Would you like to come and say something as we begin?" but he said, "no, I really wouldn't, I really cannot, I have nothing to say, and anyway I haven't been associated with the Church for 50 years." But then he said, "Although I won't come, but I will share with you one experience I had on that holy ground tour long ago.

"It was long way from California, out in North Dakota, we were making the Holy Ground there and it was very, very cold. We set off from San Francisco in Spring, and we didn't have Winter clothes, and when we got to North Dakota, it was minus 35 degrees! We stood in the snow in our shoes and with just our suits. We were all so cold. Father was cold too. That day I thought to myself, "I have to run away, this is it, this is the end." But even though my whole body was screaming out to leave, I was still standing there in the North position as Father was making the Holy Ground.

"I was thinking to himself, as soon as this is over, I am out of here. I will just turn in the keys and leave. But when Father finished, and he said the final prayer, he just walked up to me, and he put his hands on my face like this and said, "If you would have left, the tour would be over. I would have failed. I am so grateful that you would stay, even though it is so difficult."

And so, even though this brother couldn't stay in the Church, and had been gone 50 years, that memory of True Father's love can never be removed. That is the power of the connection of heart. So it is my conviction is that one day he will meet True Father in the spirit world. And Father will surely find the way to bless and resurrect his faithful son.

Anyway, back to the tour and my experience of the heart of God. It took place in Flagstaff, Arizona after a couple of weeks on the road. We were lost, we were tired and irritable in the bus, and it was late. The bus driver was long over his legal hours, and we were driving down the old Route 66 looking like for our hotel.

Do you know about Route 66? It used to be the famous and celebrated road in America. But then the interstate highways were built and the traffic dwindled away. Today it is a sad road, because along the sides there are so many failed and dying enterprises. If you are looking for a hotel, you see lots of broken neon signs everywhere that can't quite spell out the word "motel" anymore. Instead the signs say "Mo..el", or "Mot" because one or more letters are missing or broken.

Do you get the idea of what I mean? So many dark and sad facilities, the owners just hanging on but not really making the effort anymore because it seems hopeless. As I was staring out of the window in such a melancholy mood I suddenly had a thought, "What would it be like if God owned a motel here? What if God is like the owner of the failing "Paradise Hotel?" It is failing, because His children never come. He built it for his children as a place where they would be happy, but they never came. They never came, for six thousand long years.

And then I thought, what would God do? Would he be sitting behind the desk, in a dark reception, fed up and sorry for himself? You probably have been in that kind of motel yourself where the receptionist is just fed up and tired and doesn't care anymore.

I know for sure that God would not be like that. He would not just sit in the dark night after night. He'd go down to the street and he'd be looking down the road, thinking to himself, "Maybe tonight will be the night, why don't my children come home?" And yet they didn't, and he would go back, and then just wait again for another lonely day, for years, generations.

And then imagine one day, for the first time, the first of his children would come back, the True Parents, then after them the first blessed couples, the very first ones to recognize, "we found our Heavenly Parent"

How overjoyed God would be! But after a while he would grow sad, and weep again. Probably he would say to those first children, "your room is waiting, and I want you take take a rest, but, please, please go out again, there must be so many more, but they aren't at home. Please go and find them and bring them home again." Then what if some of those children who already came home went out and got lost again? How much more God would yearn to see them safely home!

I feel that's our exactly our situation as blessed families. We are among the very first who received the grace in True Parents and by doing so, we melted the heart of God. Yet our lonely Father is not satisfied in that, he is still waiting for the rest of his children to come home. So he sent us back out.

And that's why our True Mother suggested to us, it is so urgent that we find the way, anyway, to extend and multiply the blessing to all 7.6 billion people on earth and even those in the spirit world. That doesn't mean, I'm sure it doesn't mean, diluting what we did or who we are. And yet I think it is vital to recognize the lonely heart of the Father and Mother who are desperate to have all their children coming home.

God was out of his home in Heaven, walking on the streets of hell, looking up and down the road, hoping to see our faces after so many thousands of years of disappointment and misery. And at last that day came. This is what our True Parents have done. They have started the process which can never be undone. Through the Blessing, all the children of God will come home together. We who received it first have a special grace and responsibility to open those doors wide and to help all of the children of God to come home.

I just want to conclude by saying thank you. I want you to know that your work is eternally valuable and will always be remembered. Even though we haven't finished it yet, we will finish it together.

Thank you very much!