

Detainee hoped to aid church

Ohioan left Bible in N. Korean nightclub

By Andrew Welsh-Huggins
Associated Press

LEBANON, Ohio — An American who is back home after being detained for nearly six months in North Korea said Friday that he left a Bible in a nightclub hoping it would get into the hands of what he called the country's underground Christian church.

Jeffrey Fowle said he traveled to the country as a tourist but saw the opportunity as a way to follow the Christian mission "to carry the Gospel to all corners of the Earth."

"I knew it was a risk, that I was taking a gamble, but I felt compelled to do that to aid the underground church in some small way," Fowle said in an interview in his lawyer's office.

"I felt once I left the Bible somewhere that God would take it the rest of the way into the hands of some kind of Christian organization, and I'd be able to waltz out of country fat, dumb and happy, no problem," he said. "But God had other plans."

Fowle, 56, arrived in North Korea on April 29. The married father of three returned home last week after negotiations involving retired diplomat and former Ohio Congressman Tony Hall. Fowle, who conducted several interviews Friday about



Jeffrey Fowle talks about being detained in North Korea for nearly six weeks Friday in Lebanon, Ohio.

AP Photo/SKIP PETERSON

his detention, was relaxed and comfortable during a 45-minute interview.

He said he went to North Korea to experience the country and that spreading the Gospel was a secondary motivation. He'd previously traveled to Bosnia and Mongolia, he said, saying he liked "out-of-the-way places."

He was aware of warnings about travel to North Korea but went anyway, knowing that American tourists had gone and returned over the past decade.

Fowle, an equipment operator in the city of Moraine street department, said he paid about \$3,900 for the tour, plus about \$700 for a flight to Beijing. He said criticisms that going on such a tour would help the North Korean government continue its oppressive ways was a "legitimate question," but he doubted his money went far.

"My fees wouldn't have bought a tank, that's for sure," he said.

Fowle said he left the Bible — with his name in it — in a bathroom under a trash bin at a nightclub in the northern port city of Chongjin and hoped a Christian would find it. He chose that city and the nightclub in the belief there would be less security. He bought the English-Korean Bible before his trip.

Instead, his tour guide asked the next day if anyone had left a Bible there and he owned up to it. He was detained a few days later while going through customs before departure.

Fowle was taken to a hotel for about three weeks and questioned, then moved to another facility. He wrote a confession and answered questions about his motivations. He said authorities couldn't believe he had acted on his own, but he made

clear it was his own decision. He was treated well and was comfortable but was in his locked quarters 23½ hours a day, he said.

He was allowed to speak in September to Western news organizations, including The Associated Press, in five-minute interviews. He said he was given "talking points" for those interviews, meant to convey his "desperate situation."

The intention, in his mind, was "to have the U.S. government or some other entity step in to help resolve that situation."

Fowle said he knew there was a risk but believed it was worth taking to get the Bible into the hands of North Korean Christians. In hindsight, he said, he wouldn't do it again.

His family suffered in his absence, especially after the city of Moraine was forced to terminate him when his leave was exhausted. His wife, Tatyana, works only part time.

But some good has come of the incident, he said, including a deeper appreciation for his family. He apologized to his wife in a letter from North Korea and has pledged to be a better, more attentive husband and father.

Fowle said he will be glad to return to his job with the city of Moraine, a Dayton suburb. The city agreed to give him his street department job back but said risky travel in the future would result in his firing. Fowle said he agrees with the requirement and has no plans for missionary work in "closed countries" in the future.

Men-Sharpen-Men
November 28, 2014

Lesson 1:

Read the attached November 1, 2014 article regarding the Ohio man released after being detained for six months in North Korea.

Discussion/Questions:

1. Can you relate this story to one in the Bible?
2. Is Jeffrey Fowle a spiritual man?
3. Do you know Jeffrey Fowle (literally)?
4. Do you know Jeffrey Fowle (figuratively)?
5. Was Jeffrey Fowle following God?
6. What Jeffrey Fowle following God's plan for him?
7. Was the act of leaving a Bible in a North Korean restroom a righteous act? Was this a wise act?
8. Would God ask someone to do perform a mission such as this?
9. What can we learn from this experience?
10. Would you do this?
11. How is it possible to know Christ in a country such as North Korea?

Lesson 2

1. Read Parade article about Bush 41/Bush 43.
2. Have you ever done something that most people would consider unwise?

THE LEAP OF HIS LIFE



PARATROOPER.
PRESIDENT.
PASSIONATE PATRIOT.
GEORGE H.W. BUSH'S INCREDIBLE
ACHIEVEMENTS ARE BROUGHT TO LIFE
IN A NEW BOOK BY HIS BIGGEST CHAMPION:
SON GEORGE W. BUSH.

COVER
PHOTOGRAPH
BY ERIC DRAPER

FROM HIS DISTINCTIVE PERSPECTIVE AS THE SON OF A U.S. PRESIDENT WHO ALSO SERVED AS PRESIDENT, GEORGE W. BUSH IS UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO TELL THE STORY OF HIS FATHER'S LIFE, WHICH HE DID IN HIS NEW BOOK, *41: A PORTRAIT OF MY FATHER*. AS THE AUTHOR READILY ADMITS, HIS POINT OF VIEW—THAT OF A SON WHO LOVES AND ADMIRES HIS FATHER—IS NOT OBJECTIVE. BUT IT IS EXTRAORDINARY. THE RESULT IS A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL EXAMINATION OF THE ENTIRETY OF THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH, WHO IS NOW 90.

HERE, GEORGE W. BUSH SHARES AN EXCLUSIVE BOOK EXCERPT—THE OPENING CHAPTER CALLED “BEGINNINGS”—WITH *PARADE*. “I TRIED TO PORTRAY THAT HE HAS A JOYFUL SPIRIT AS HE AGES,” SAYS THE FORMER PRESIDENT—TURNED—AUTHOR.

In late May 2014, I received a phone call from Jean Becker, my father's longtime chief of staff. She got straight to the point.

“Your dad wants to make a parachute jump on his 90th birthday. What do you think?”

About 18 months earlier, Jean had called to review the funeral arrangements for my father. He had spent nearly a month in the hospital with pneumonia, and many feared that this good man was headed toward eternity. He could not walk, and he tired easily. In my phone calls to Dad, he never complained. Self-pity was not in George Bush's DNA. Now he was hoping to complete another parachute jump—the eighth of his life, counting the one he made after his torpedo bomber was struck by Japanese antiaircraft fire over the Pacific in 1944.

“Are you sure this is what he wants?” I asked.

“Absolutely,” she said.

“What do the doctors say?”

“Some say yes, some say no.”

“What about Mother?”

“She is concerned. She knows that he wants to do it. But she's worried that the jump will tire him out and he won't be able to

George W. Bush (right) and his mother, Barbara, along with friends and family anxiously watch George H.W. Bush soar through the sky.



enjoy the birthday party that she's planning for that night."

After some thought, I said, "I think he ought to do it."

"Why?"

"Because it will make him feel younger."

The truth is that my opinion didn't matter much. After a parachute jump on his 85th birthday, my father had announced that he would make another jump on his 90th birthday. And George H.W. Bush is a man of his word.

A few weeks later, Laura and I arrived for the birthday celebration in Kennebunkport, Maine. The jump logistics were complete, the party was planned, and Mother was now on board. The afternoon before the jump, I sat next to Dad on the porch of his beloved home at Walker's Point, perched on a rocky outcropping over the Atlantic. I had been painting an ocean scene and was wearing cargo pants stained with oil paint. For a few peaceful minutes, we stared quietly at the sea.

"What are you thinking about, Dad?" I asked.

"It's just beautiful," he said, still looking out at the ocean. It seemed that he had said all that he wanted to say.

We sat quietly for a few more minutes. Was he reflecting on the jump? His life? God's grace? I did not want to interrupt.

Then he spoke. "Do those pants come in clean?"

I laughed, something I have been doing with my father all my life. His quip was typical. He was not nervous about his jump or his life. He was at peace. And he was sharing his joy with others.

The morning of Dad's birthday, June 12, dawned chilly and gray. There was a modest breeze, about 15 miles per hour. At first, we feared that the clouds might force a change in plans. Fortunately, the veteran paratroopers coordinating the jump, known as the All Veteran Group, determined that the visibility was sufficient. The mission was a go.

The crew fired up the Bell 429 helicopter that was parked on the lush green lawn outside the two-story wooden cabin that served as Dad's office at Walker's Point. Dad was

clad in a custom-fitted black flight suit with a patch that read "41@90." His preflight routine included a final weather clearance, a harness check, and an interview with my daughter Jenna, a correspondent for the *Today* show. Even with his jump looming, he was willing to share his time to help his granddaughter.

"What's your birthday wish on your 90th birthday?" Jenna asked.

"For happiness for my grandkids," he replied. "I hope they have the same kind of life I have for 90 years—full of joy."

He did have one more wish: "Make sure the parachute opens."

Family and friends gathered at the landing zone: the lawn of my parents' church, St. Ann's, the same place where Dad had landed five years earlier and where his parents had been married 93 years earlier. (As Mother puts it, if the jump did not succeed, at least we wouldn't have to travel far for the burial.) At about 10:45 a.m., one of the members of the jump team approached me.

"Mr. President," he said, "your father is airborne."

A few minutes later, we spotted a small speck in the sky—the chopper at 6,500 feet. After the helicopter made a circle around the church, we saw several chutes pop open. Two belonged to the video jumpers tasked with chronicling the leap. The other was a large red, white, and blue chute carrying Dad and master jumper Mike Elliott, who was making his third jump with Dad and his 10,227th jump overall. The crowd cheered as the tandem headed our way.

"They sure are coming in hot," my brother Marvin said, with a touch of worry.

He was right. The wind had taken the chute off course. Mike corrected with a hard turn in the final descent. Dad slammed into the ground, skidded for a few

43 ON 41

President George W. Bush recently spoke to *Parade* about his book *41: A Portrait of My Father*, which details his father's experiences, including the pain of losing a daughter and the commitment to serving his country in various positions, including congressman, CIA director, vice president, and president.

Your book proves that your father is different from the stiff, blue-blooded image that many have of him.

He is a blue blood in the sense that he was raised up in the East. But what people don't realize is that his

parents were from the Midwest, so there was inculcated in him some midwestern values.

This is a man who worked incredibly hard in anything he did. In this case, he was selling oilfield supplies. As I put in the book, there were no trust funds; there were no guarantees.

Your father has been a tremendous risk taker. Where do you think that came from?

I think it came from the early experiences. This is a man who at age 17 decides to join the navy and not go to college, against the advice of his father and

[Secretary of War] Henry Stimson, for example. He wanted to serve.

Then he gets shot down—and by the way, flying off of carriers was very risky—and survives. To me, the rest of the risks that he took in his life were minor compared to that.

It appears that your father's losses made him stronger, but also more understanding of others.

That is exactly right. The first big loss, of course, was the loss of a daughter [George and Barbara's first daughter, Robin Bush, died of leukemia in 1953], and I tried the best I can to explain how emotional that must have been for Mother and Dad.

Of course, there was political loss. Dad lost twice for the Senate in Texas and he ended up being president. I lost for Congress when I first ran for office and ended up being president myself. There's no question that his example helped me, and it should help others.

According to his son, George H.W. Bush found the greatest joy in his family.



feet, and then face-planted into the grass.

The crowd went silent. Would he get up? Was he hurt? No one moved until the ground crew lifted him into his wheelchair. The grandkids struck up a chorus of "Happy Birthday" to camouflage their anxiety.

Finally the sea of uniforms parted. George H.W. Bush had a smile on his face.

I grabbed Mother, and we walked toward Dad. She leaned over and gave him a kiss. I followed with a handshake and a hug.

"How did it feel?" I asked.

"Cold," he said.

"I'm sure proud of you, Dad," I said. "That was an awesome jump."

He pointed to his partner. "Mike did all the work," he said.

The scene captured the character of George Bush. He was daring and courageous, always seeking new adventures and new challenges. He was humble and quick to share credit. He deflected attention from himself and refused to brag about his accomplishments. He trusted others and inspired their loyalty. And above all, he found joy in his family and his faith. Nothing made him happier than being surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchildren in a place where he had so many wonderful memories.

After the jump, Dad returned to Walker's Points to eat, take a nap, and prepare for the 250 family members, friends, and Bush administration alumni attending the birthday party that night. He rewarded himself with a Bloody Mary over lunch. Then he received a call from his friend Arnold Schwarzenegger, the movie star and former governor of California.

"Happy birthday," Arnold said, "to the most badass 90-year-old I know."

I agreed with Arnold's assessment. George H.W. Bush set an example for many people in many ways. He is determined to live his life to the fullest—to the very end.



Forty-three and the former first lady congratulating 41 on his "awesome" 90th birthday jump.



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