

# THE KOREA TIMES

*First in the Nation*

## Third level of leadership

Casey Lartigue, Jr

September 22, 2015

He came along before the age of TED Talks, but I have the feeling that Leonard E. Read (1898-1983) would have fit in nicely with an 18-minute version of his speech "How to Advance Liberty." Read, founder of the Foundation for Economic Education, discussed three ascending categories of leadership, with his focus being on giving advice to advocates of economic freedom.

The level that interests me now is the third one, which Read said is difficult to reach because it "requires that the individual achieve that degree of excellence in understanding and exposition which will inspire others to seek him as a tutor." You need to be good at what you do, and attract people, instead of the "reforming, propagandizing, thrusting-at technique" used by many advocates. Read said there is a good way to test how you are doing: "Observe how many are seeking your counsel. If none, then you can draw your own conclusions."

I don't expect to reach that third level of leadership soon, but I have been encouraged this year by the parade of talented and educated people seeking my counsel. The visitors have included students (high school to graduate school, and international students in Korea), travelers to Korea, retirees, teachers, business people, housewives and consultants. They want to learn about, volunteer for and donate to Teach North Korean Refugees (TNKR), which I co-founded with South Korean researcher Lee Eun-koo. I have been invited to speak at some influential universities (Harvard, Yale, Tufts) this November about our volunteer project.

There is a feeling of *déjà vu* for me. Back when I was a researcher at the Cato Institute, I had activists, parents and some of those universities reaching out to me. A young man inspired by my school work and activism called me out of the blue, he wanted to be my volunteer assistant. I was moved that he was inspired by me, but it is still more special now because I am running a tiny volunteer NGO, compared to being a researcher at an established think tank.

Another good sign that our organization is reaching the third level of leadership: Young people sign up, despite having attractive options. During the summer, Korean-American Christine Kim joined me as a volunteer on a fellowship from her university in California. She's a talented young woman and she could have chosen many larger, well-known and well-funded organizations.

I tried my best to lower her expectations, but she made it clear that she is a fan of mine and that she wanted to be a part of what we are doing. She tutored at least five North Korean refugees, some twice a week. Another Korean-American, Grace Lee, followed in her footsteps, tutoring

North Korean refugees for four to six hours a day at our small office during her two-week trip to Seoul. The work of Christine and Grace made me realize that we could have in-house tutors for refugees on our waiting list, as the interns inspired by me in turn inspired us to open a small study for North Korean refugees.

Even if we don't reach that third leadership level, we have another good sign that we are doing the right thing: A waiting list. People often ask me how we recruit refugees to join us, but I tell them: "We don't." These days, the refugees find us, either on their own or by referrals. As Read said: "The tutorship of any real master will be sought without any advertising on his part." Despite lacking an operating budget, independent office or paid staff, we have had about 190 North Korean refugees and 290 volunteers participate in our program since we began in March 2013. We have more than 50 refugees on our waiting list and many prospective tutors and volunteers contact me every day. Some eager refugees began contacting me directly, lobbying for their chance to join our program sooner. Incredibly, we now have tutors taking three and four hour bus rides each way to come to Seoul to join us. We even have a tutor who will fly in from Jeju Island to tutor on back-to-back days.

Another good sign for a cause? Participants raise and donate money, even without being asked. Refugees have volunteered and have donated money to us. Volunteers are setting up crowd-sourcing pages to raise money and donors we don't even know have put money in our bank account. The Atlas Network in Washington, D.C., is now matching donations to double the donations we receive.

We haven't reached that third level of leadership that Read discussed decades ago, but we have some good signs that we are on the right track, that we have people seeking our counsel.