

My Life as a Unificationist Missionary in Zambia - an African Testimony [Part 1]

Rudolf Faerber
October 10, 2018



In 1975, Father asked trinities of one member each from Japan, the United States and Germany go out and work in some 95 countries received missionaries. Rudolf Faerber was a young member when he left for his assigned country of Zambia, in southern Africa. He is still there today. Zambia is now one of the nations in which our movement shows significant growth, and the story offers ideas to those pioneering anywhere in the world.

The assignment of overseas missionaries happened in early 1975. In Germany, the late Rev. Paul Werner assigned missionaries to mission countries at a meeting at the Camberg training center. I was assigned to Zambia. I was quite young and inexperienced; I had been in the movement for just over a year.

I arrived, as a representative of True Parents, on April 25, in Lusaka, Zambia's capital. It was evening and the sun had already set, as it does quickly in the subtropics. Since I had nowhere else to go, I booked into a hotel. It was my first night of countless others, and I pledged myself to Heavenly Father. Many thoughts were running through my mind. When will the other missionaries come? Where should I start? Can I openly witness? How can I raise funds for the mission? Where can I stay?

In the morning, while exploring the surroundings, I asked a man of Indian origin for directions to the German embassy. After asking where I had come from, and what I was here for, he invited me to stay with him for a few days. I was surprised at the spontaneous offer. I felt God's guidance and took my luggage to his apartment.

Since I arrived with a three-month tourist visa, I needed to quickly find a way to extend it to a three-year work permit, because we were told our mission would last that long. More than 40 years have now passed -- a long time, yet it has gone by very fast. God and True Parents helped me through, though I often only realized it in retrospect. I was equipped with the Divine Principle and great enthusiasm, yet I was inexperienced. I did not know anything about Zambia; it was all new to me. Moreover, my resources were limited.

Everything was interesting. The people were friendly and patient; they had difficulties understanding my accent, but admired my pronunciation. The weather was hot and I learned it would not rain for the next six months. Zambia is a huge, beautiful country with largely untouched nature. It had a relatively small population then of less than ten million people. The major religions are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism. Copper mining provides the main income for the country; most of the people living in villages depend on farming.

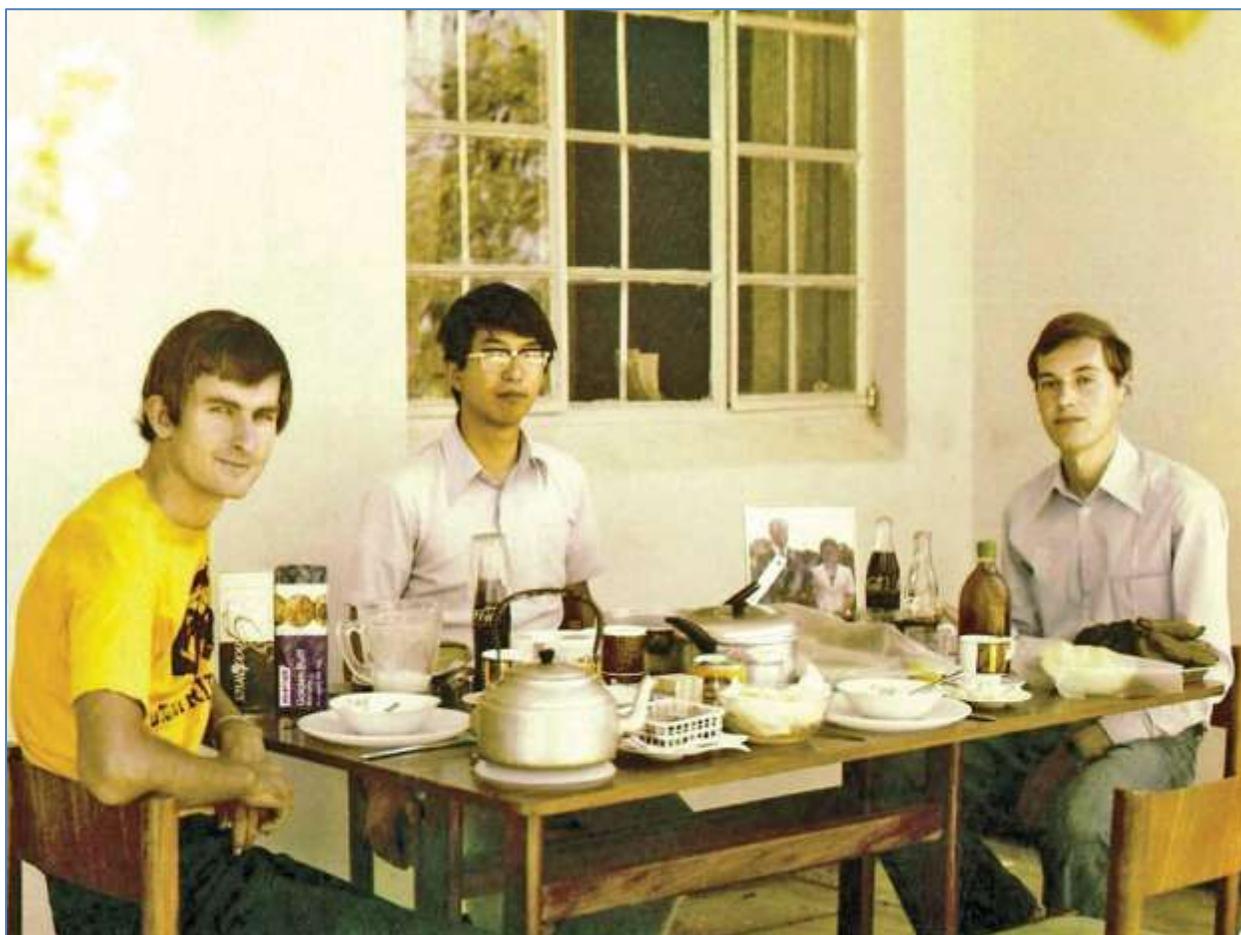
I left messages at the Japanese, American and German embassies for the other two missionaries. I knew only their names and nationalities. I explored the downtown area and visited the immigration authorities; I asked how to extend my stay and learned that I would have to form an organization first and then submit an application.

Every week I reported by letter to Rev. Paul Werner. After about a week, I received a message that Robert Williamson, my fellow missionary from America, had arrived. Happily, we met and shared our first meal

together of cheese and bread. It was good to have a person to speak openly with.

Robert was born in Zambia. He'd spent his childhood here; his parents had worked with the copper mines. For him, it was like a homecoming. He knew the city well. I was impressed by how well prepared he was; he had many speeches and audio tapes of True Parents, which were rare and precious. Good preparation secures a strong foundation.

Initially, I took malaria prevention tablets, but since my stay would be long, I discontinued taking them because of possible side effects. Even now, malaria is the cause of the most serious health and economic problems in Africa, even though it can largely be prevented by managing the environment. Many children die from it, mainly when they don't get proper food and their bodies are weak. Over the years, we suffered from it. Things were hard in the beginning. After only a few months, I thought, How can I survive three years?



The three missionaries dispatched to Zambia in 1975 celebrate Children's Day that year; Left to right: Robert Williamson, Eiju Majima and Rudolf Faerber

Preliminary efforts

To start our mission work, Robert and I began attending church services at the Anglican cathedral, the main house of Christian worship, where we made friends. After the service, tea and cookies were offered to those who wanted fellowship. People generally were open and welcoming, so we developed contacts in the local and expatriate communities. David was one, a student of hotel management whose parents helped us on some occasions and invited us for meals and social gatherings.

Having gotten to know several young people, Robert and I set up an athletic club, the Lusaka Striders, and we recruited students interested in training. Sports are good for young people. They teach discipline, a sense of belonging and confidence, among other virtues. The most important objective for us was to introduce young Zambians in due course to Divine Principle lectures. George, a high school student, was a good athlete. Because we were not yet able to open a center, friends of George's whom he had introduced us to became home members.

One day we learned that Mr. Eiju Majima, the Japanese missionary, from the 1,800-couple blessing, was waiting for us at our new leave houses in Kabulonga, just outside Lusaka. The three of us were together now, representing three cultures, three different worlds, but with the same mission and the same True Parents; so God's plan was complete. We discussed plans for future church registration, farming, and so on. Eiju obtained a journalist's permit to work for our Japanese newspaper. Robert was able to renew his old residence permit, but I would only be able to stay for three months with my tourist visa.

A friendly lawyer helped us register our own company. We named it *Twikatane African Art Limited*.

Twikatane means "unity" in Bemba, one of the local languages. The registrar of companies accepted the name and issued a certificate. I then submitted my work permit application to the immigration headquarters.



Zambia's Unification Praise Team Choir

Turmoil and challenges

According to Zambian law, I had to wait outside the country for the outcome of my submission. Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Zaire were all experiencing civil wars. Malawi, on Zambia's eastern border, was the best option. I stayed at the house of our missionaries there. During my stay, I made effort to be useful, doing some gardening, painting the landlord's house and doing other everyday jobs. It was a time for reflecting on my recent experiences and for making plans for the future.

One day, however, disaster struck. We read in a local newspaper that Unification Church members in Tanzania, a socialist country at that time, had been imprisoned. Sure enough, a few days later, the police arrested and interrogated us and then immediately deported us; Malawi's government then was very conservative and dictatorial. Because I could not yet return to Zambia, I flew from Malawi to Rhodesia, where I had the address of the missionaries in Salisbury (now Harare).

After the incident in Malawi, I did not have much hope of getting a permit for Zambia, but I continued to pray. A few weeks later my prayers were answered; my permit arrived by mail and I could prepare to return. I travelled by train overnight to Bulawayo and crossed the border to Francistown, Botswana, because the Rhodesia-Zambia frontier was closed. The intensifying liberation war in Rhodesia was greatly affecting Zambia.

When I arrived back in Lusaka in September 1975, we knew we had to decide how to set up our mission. We still had to establish the church and train new members. We had contacts from witnessing, but neither permanent residence nor an adequate income. Robert began teaching English to a Japanese businessman, and I started teaching German to a small class. Eiju continued working as a journalist.

Meanwhile, we had developed a good relationship with the deaconesses of the Anglican cathedral. She was from Jamaica and was the driving force of their church. I sometimes accompanied her to church meetings and taught her German, since she had been invited to visit Germany for a church conference. One day when I arrived for a lesson, she looked concerned and showed me a scathing article about our church in a newspaper from the United Kingdom. News spread quickly and people suddenly stopped associating with us; other churches did not want to see us, and from the pulpit, ministers warned "their sheep" about the presence of "wolves."

Before we arrived in the mission field, God had already been working there, preparing certain situations, certain people. It was up to us to find them and engage them responsibly. That was my conviction. God had surely prepared a foundation through the Christian churches for True Parents' work. But after this setback I had a strong feeling in my prayer that things would now take much longer.



A seminar for religious leaders in Zambia on March 3, 2011

Moving boldly in a new direction

We needed to rebuild our foundation, because many of our acquaintances and friends were distancing themselves from us. What should we do next? Someone suggested, Why don't you try making traditional German sausages? After hesitating, I agreed and tried my luck in the kitchen. To my delight, some friends found what we produced delicious and encouraged us to continue. In fact, as a boy, I had occasionally helped my Father make sausages for a restaurant he'd owned in Germany.

Our startup capital amounted to less than twenty U.S. dollars, plus an old car, but within a couple of weeks, we were delivering homemade smoked sausages to prestigious hotels such as the InterContinental and the Ridgeway. The income helped us rent a small farm on the western outskirts of Lusaka. With the recent controversy, being out of the center of things for a while was good.

We were cooking the sausages in a big galvanized tin tub over a charcoal fire, with just a thermometer by which to observe and control the temperature. If they had known that at the hotels...! In the beginning, we had to improvise everything.

Through experimenting and with occasional errors, I continued production. Robert managed the sales, and the business expanded, so we had to employ some helpers. We had no electrical machinery, only a few refrigerators. We made everything by hand. In fact, it was more than a year before we could afford to buy our first electric appliance, a small meat-mincing machine. Somehow, making sausages seemed a strange thing for missionaries to do. People knew we were a bit different. We were three or four brothers staying together in a house with no women around. I heard people called us "the monks who make sausages." Only later would I understand God's wisdom behind our sausage business.