

An Anonymous Japanese Missionary's Testimony to His Mission in Africa in 1978

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Early missionaries with children in Mauritania

A Japanese missionary to an African country experiencing a state of war writes about his relationships with the other two missionaries and how the circumstances they faced drew them together despite their differences. In 1975, True Parents sent three missionaries -- one Japanese, one American and one German -- out to pioneer 95 countries of the world. (At the time he wrote this, he chose to remain anonymous and did not divulge the name of his country.)

One Saturday in September 1978, the American missionary and I attended a wedding ceremony of a relative of the director of the high school where he used to work. He was so moved by the pageantry of the local customs he remarked, "This is my country; and these are my people."

Later that night as I prepared the sermon for the Sunday service, a phone call came from Headquarters for the American brother. After he put the phone down, he told me that Father had chosen him to go to the Unification Theological Seminary. I could not believe it! I could not stop my tears. I was so close to him, and felt we did not have to hide anything between us. All of us recognized how much this brother had contributed, and how hard he had worked for the restoration of our nation. Our hearts were reluctant to see him go.

The next day I cancelled Sunday service, and we went to the zoo and the botanical gardens. During the family meeting that night, a conflict broke out between the American and German missionaries. Until that time, they had silently struggled because of the differences in their natures. The German brother said something which provoked the American to retort gruffly. For more than three years they had made so much effort to unite, yet that moment divided them. The German started to sob. After some time, the American brother felt sorry and placed his hand on the shoulder of the German missionary, "I'm sorry." This display of affection produced more tears. I was so moved. The two tried to make peace, at this critical last moment. I felt that the tears, which were sincere and pure, would be the solution in the end.

When the American brother left the next day, I felt as if the object of my love was taken from me. An indescribable sense of emptiness overwhelmed me. I began to understand how my wife must have felt when she stood at the airport and watched me leave Japan for my mission nation. After his departure, the center seemed empty and I felt unbearably lonely. I think such a patient and steady worker as he is very rare. He knew many hymns and used to sing them while playing the guitar. His well-rounded character drew the hearts of many people.

Our country was in the midst of war. My German counterpart urged me to go to a neighboring country and escape the danger. I knew that he had determined to die in this nation, but I held back my answer. I thought if only he and the one native member (a brother) stayed, they might die. Yet, I felt, as a blessed member, I should continue God's lineage. When I realized what might happen to them, I sensed we should share a common destiny. Since we had started our mission with such determination and pledge, I prepared to give up my life, too. But I hid my internal determination from my German brother and said superficially, "I will not leave unless such instruction comes from Headquarters."



First Uganda missionaries with Lady Dr. (Shin Wook) Kim and Japanese journalist (1978)

A few days later, we felt the building shake because of bombs exploding throughout the city. The three of us started to pray desperately. We felt as if it would be our last day on earth, and prepared to go to the spirit world. Tears of repentance welled up in my eyes. I felt no accomplishment; I did not feel qualified to go to the spirit world. I felt sorry to Heavenly Father and True Parents.

The curfew forced us to spend most of the time in the center. Day after day, long-range bombs pierced the air with such a strange hissing noise, then exploded. This made me the most nervous. The sound of firing machine guns, bazookas, and anti-tank grenades resounded throughout our apartment. At night, soldiers came into our yard and started shooting at each other. We were extremely tense.

Under this constant pressure, I noticed the character differences between my German brother and me surfaced more readily and often. Because of this, we prayed more and studied Principle together as much as possible. I remember one day in particular when I stubbornly refused to listen to him. He cried. His next words pierced my soul: "If we don't make unity, we might die!" We were on the verge of life and death, yet I had acted self-centeredly. I realized my fallen nature, and cried to God desperately to be able to change. The three of us persevered under the embracing leadership of my German brother, and we lived through the war.

I believe that Father sent the best American and German brothers to this nation. I had the most personality problems among the three of us. While I often acted selfishly, these two brothers always endured the toughest moments and worked in concert with me, never once hurting me. When I think of either of them, I cannot help but burst into tears. My German brother gave me such wonderful advice to help me develop my personality; I will never forget his kindness, and for loving me enough to speak about it, rather than remaining silent.

After my experience in this nation, I deeply realized how strict is the way of restoration through indemnity. I could not gain victory through indemnity with conceptual faith. Through living together with the other missionaries and native members, the hidden problems of my faith and personality were clearly revealed. With no way to avoid them, I had to face them squarely and deal with them. By doing so, I believe my faith and personality were strengthened.

Even though we had conflicts with each other because of differences in language, customs, manners, I realized that we are brothers because of True Parents, and thus underneath it all, we share the same heart.



Early missionaries to with member in Senegal 1977