

The Heart of a Pioneer Missionary - Part 1

Paul Werner

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Paul Werner (left) with True Father on the Henninger Tower in Frankfurt, Germany, during the First World Tour

Paul and Christel Werner joined as a married couple in the United States in August 1963. In 1964 they returned to Germany among the first wave of missionaries sent from the US to Europe. For one year they witnessed in Wiesbaden in Germany, but then felt guided to begin the mission in neighboring Austria.

I received in prayer in the spring of 1965, to start a new mission in Austria. Immediately I quit my job and loaded up my VW-bus with a few necessities. On the platform in the back I put a piece of plywood and a sleeping bag. Little did I know then that this would be my church center for a long time to come.

Christel held a job at a large insurance company at that time, and our son Klaus was in school. So I left my wife and son behind in Wiesbaden for the next two years and headed for my mission in Austria, on May 18, 1965, as the first missionary going out from Germany.

After arriving in Vienna the next morning, I parked my van in front of a church and prayed and prayed. I wanted to restore this nation as quickly as possible, and I knew much indemnity had to be paid. I was resolved to pay more indemnity to speed up the restoration process and to have a large family very quickly. Therefore, I prayed day and night and fasted most of the time.

In my search for prepared people I walked the streets of Vienna day in and day out, but nobody responded to my witnessing efforts. Nobody wanted to listen to the message I was so eager to convey. The only partner I could relate to during those lonely days, weeks and months was our Heavenly Father. I talked to Him day and night, and we had a very close relationship. I always felt spirit world around me, but at the same time I was very lonesome. Yet God showered me with so much love, as I tried to comfort and reassure Him of my commitment to this mission. I could hardly sleep anymore, and when I dozed off sometime during the night, I woke up from my own prayers.

My whole being was so involved with Heavenly Father, that my mouth kept talking to Him day and night. I received so much love and energy from God, that I know what it means, to be “intoxicated with the love of God”. This lasted for years, not just temporarily for a day or a week, so I know it works. I just lived my life for God and He responded not only to me but to the people I came in contact with. Many unusual things began to happen around me, and I became a real spiritual fireball, eager to share God’s love with His lost children. By being active for Him, searching for His children and proclaiming the appearance of our True Parents on this earth in our lifetime, my spiritual senses became so keen and helped me to perceive, what God is all about.

When I walked through the Vienna Woods, I felt God in the wind, and I talked to Him, tears streaming down my face. Physically I was all by myself, but it was the most beautiful experience just walking with God and perceiving His love. When I prayed I was so deeply connected with my Heavenly Father, even big pine trees bent down, as if they were bowing before me. Heaven really moved nature as a result of my relationship with God.



Father visits Frankfurt central square 1965

I usually went to sleep in the back of my VW-bus around 2:00 a.m., telling spirit world to wake me up at 10 minutes to six, to begin my day. Indeed, they were very reliable. At exactly 10 minutes to six they shook me and woke me up, and the first word coming over my lips was “Father”. After washing up at a camping place or gas station I fixed my breakfast, a jelly sandwich, and was ready for action. While driving downtown I constantly talked to God and then got out of the van singing and smiling. Many times though I walked through the streets with tears running down my face, but whenever I witnessed to someone, I was cheerful and happy. People who already knew me, couldn’t figure it out. They shook their heads and were puzzled, because they knew I had left my wife and son behind in Germany, to work for God in this nation. They knew I lived in a VW-bus for months and months, and still I was happy and joyful at all times. That’s all they saw. In reality I was lonely many times, also for my family, but the mission always came first. God had to take care of my wife and son, while I devoted my life to His work completely.

Because I was always fasting, I lost much weight and looked quite skinny, and my contacts were really curious to find out what made me tick. I told them all about God, and they believed me, because they saw, how God works and how much love I received from Him, enabling me to carry out this impossible task. The point is, that Heaven really united with me at that time, because my whole life was devoted to this mission, and I was able to perceive God, talking to Him all the time.

My first contact in Vienna was a student who was working on his PhD in economics, Walter Linder. I met him many, many times and we discussed the Divine Principle. We became very good friends and he accepted the Principle and Father, but he had two great weaknesses—women and alcohol. We had many deep experiences together. Once he invited me to visit him at a certain time, and when I came to his room, I found him totally drunk. I just sat at his bedside until he woke up and then I taught him the Principle. There were many other experiences we shared, and I tried very hard, to win him for Father. He even met Father in Frankfurt, Germany in 1965. I didn’t want to give him up, but he was such a weak person, even though he clearly understood that the Messiah had returned and that this was the way to go.

Finally, I remember standing with Walter at a plaza in Vienna, and he said to me, “Paul, I know this is the truth. I know that Sun Myung Moon is the Messiah. I know that everything you have told me will come about. I know it, but I am not strong enough. I cannot come right now. I tried and tried, but I can’t, I’m too weak.” We were just like brothers, and it tore me apart inside when he went in one direction and I went into the other direction of the plaza. Again I had to start from scratch. Ten years later one of our members saw him in Stuttgart, Germany, and talked to him.

He said, “Yes, if I had only come then. I remember Paul. I remember what he taught. Now I see hundreds of people everywhere, hundreds of Moonies. On every street corner there is a Moonie. Everybody writes about Rev. Moon. All the papers write that he is the Messiah, sometimes in a very cynical and negative way, but it is all over the world. Paul was right. But in the meantime I am married, I have three children and had to cope with one calamity after another. I’ll never forget standing in the middle of the plaza in

Vienna with Paul that evening, hearing him say, 'Walter, make that jump.' But I had to answer, 'I cannot go now. I am too weak.' My heart was aching and he felt the same way. He was crying and so was I, but we both went into different directions."



Paul Werner driving True Father through Belgium in 1965

I began working with ministers, visiting the Calvinist church and the Lutheran church. They are situated side by side in Dorotheergasse [Street], in Vienna. The Calvinist church had three Ministers, and I contacted the youngest one. I met him on the stairway to his office and conveyed the main points of the Divine Principle to him in 45 minutes. His head was spinning and he turned all red in his face from excitement. Finally he asked me: "Who are you? What you told me here in 45 minutes I have never heard in all my life. This is incredible. I would like you to speak in my church." Naturally, I was happy to oblige and gave lectures in his church in the summer of 1965.

Then, on July 26, 1965 Father arrived in Germany during his first world tour, blessing Holy Grounds in 120 nations, and I had the privilege to drive Father and his party through Europe in my VW-bus.



The VW van Paul Werner used

At that time, he also blessed a Holy Ground in the Rathauspark [City Hall] in Vienna, where I participated in the ceremony. It was a beautiful spot and as I resumed my mission work in Austria after Father's departure, I visited this precious piece of land quite frequently, praying for the salvation of this nation. Sometimes, while meditating at the Holy Ground, I saw Father walking by. It was quite realistic, and I'm sure, Father often prayed for the success of our mission. Needless to say, an experience like this gave me an extra boost each time.

Every day I was active witnessing in the streets and visiting churches. Fall turned into winter and it was getting quite cold in my VW-bus. It was almost impossible to find a room in Vienna at that time, however hard I tried. I told Heavenly Father in my prayers about my predicament, and said;

“Father, it’s getting cold now and therefore I can’t sleep in the van any longer. I need a little roof over my head. You must help me out.” I sincerely believed that God heard my prayers and would provide for me. The very next day a social worker from the Calvinist church referred me to an 90-year old couple, who had a room available. It was a small place in an old house in the outskirts of Vienna, on the other side of the Danube, on Donizettiweg [Way] 23, Wien 22. My quarters were next to a chicken coop, and to get up there, I had to climb up a steep outside staircase, more like a ladder. There was no stove, no running water, not even cold water, and to get to the outhouse, I had to walk through the chicken coop. This was quite an adventure, especially at night, and I had to be careful in closing the gates, not to let any of the chickens escape. To prevent the snow from blowing into my room every time I opened the door, I nailed a blanket in front of the opening from the inside. Since it was an attic, the ceiling of my room was slanted, and of course there was no heating system. To get some heat, I bought a 500-watt heating lamp. In the corner under the roof I placed my little altar with a small picture of Father from 1960, in his Korean attire, the only picture I had, and a candle. When I came home from witnessing, usually at 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., I lit my candle, plugged in my heat lamp and positioned it to warm up my back, because in the front I had all the spiritual heat I needed.



Paul, Christel and Klaus Werner (1966)

I was all by myself in that little room, rejected so many times during the day, but I had the most beautiful relationship with God. My spiritual eyes were opened and I could see many spirits around me when I began to pray. They had already waited for me. True Parents were always present as I had long conversations with my Heavenly Father. When I was awakened by spirit world at 10 minutes to six, in the morning (I never needed an alarm clock), I greeted my Father in heaven, washed up and fixed my special breakfast, a jelly sandwich. Praying while driving into the city in my VW-bus, I asked spirit world to guide me to the prepared people in Vienna.

Once I met with three or four young couples at one of their homes in the outskirts of the city, and taught them the Principle with so much vigor and spiritual power, that they were deeply impressed and within half an hour confessed their shortcomings to each other in front of the other couples. They were touched by the Holy Spirit and shed many tears listening to me hour after hour. Afterwards many phenomena occurred, and they had many visions and dreams. This happened often in different areas of Vienna in my Home Churches. I could feel God’s power working through me and people were so deeply impressed by the message I brought that I had trouble convincing them that I wasn’t the Messiah, just his messenger.

It was a wonderful time, because I had found people I could talk to.