

Part Nine

Bavarians—You've just got to love them

The Undisputed Godfather

There was a new start, a new providence—you name it! The Italians were coming! Somehow I got caught up with the "Italian Connection". By the middle of 1981 the "Providence" of Great Britain had outlived itself and all that manpower, Moonic Power really, was descending on Germany. And just like the Allied Forces did in 1945, this time the Moonie Forces divided Germany again in a couple of regions. There was the "English Region" somewhere around the north of Germany, the "Austrian/German Region" around the city of Hannover, the "French Region" around the city of Stuttgart and, last but not least, the "Italian Region" around the city of Munich. Every region was led by their respective National Leader and the Italian Region was led by the undisputed Godfather, Franco Ravaglioli. He was half "The Divine Augustus", half Al Capone—and all Italian! Imagine Luciano Pavarotti without the beard, and blond—then you have pretty much the vision of our Don Corleone. He wasn't just obese—he was fat. But he had a very good sense of humor, that is, at least he *did* have a sense of humor, which is quite unusual for an Unification Church Leader.

I was sent for a quick stint in the city of Regensburg and after a couple of weeks they called me "in from the cold" to the Center in Munich. There were precious few German brothers and sisters around, mostly Italians and Japanese. There was another German sister, Anja, from Flatland, in the north of Germany; Albert, very young and truly Bavarian; and me. The rest were all foreigners. Our leader was "Clever Elena"—there was nothing she didn't know; nothing she couldn't understand; nothing she hadn't yet seen under the sun! In a way she was very much like Jeannine—a Unification Church sister trained for leadership. When we started out in Munich, Clever Elena was somewhat tired of life: "Why on earth aren't there any Germans around to lead the Center in Munich?" she asked herself, and others, more than once. Why on

earth weren't there? Maybe Franco—"Al"—wanted to have someone he could trust, and since Clever Elena had already been a leader in England, it was only natural, no logical, that she would be asked to do the honors.

Like I said, she was somewhat tired of life, which subdued all of our spirits as well. First, we had a Witnessing Center in a very small basement apartment far away from the pedestrian area of Munich and Franco Al's secretary (who was never called that way by us, because we didn't have any secretaries, just sisters) was looking for a suitable place for all of us to stay. When that apartment was finally found—a big three-bedroom apartment, but very far away—all of us moved in. Well, all of the Italians and Japanese—the two German sisters stayed in the nicer place with Franco Al and his wife. Officially we were three German single young ladies renting this apartment, but in reality I was living there alone with about twenty foreigners, half of them Japanese men. The other tenants of the building were truly concerned about us—or about me. "Who are these people?" "What are they doing?" No one asked outright, though.

After a couple of months, by the middle of 1982, we had found a nice apartment building close, but not that close, to the city center of Munich, and we all moved there and occupied three of the available four floors.

"The Police are standing in front of the door"

Now I will tell you one of those stories where life is stranger than fiction. Sometimes we would have these prayer conditions, and this one started at 5 A.M. The condition finished somewhere around 5:30 A.M. and by 6 A.M. everybody was fast asleep again! On that particular day I was still awake and dressed, as was another sister. She noticed some strange goings-on at the apartment door; she came to me and told me, "The police are standing in front of the door...what shall we do?" Heck, I didn't know either, I was just too tired to think! It wasn't even 6 A.M. and the police were standing in front of the door...how did they know that there was anybody up that early? Odile—that was her name—and I were still debating what to do, whether or not to wake Elena, and without much ado, two policemen were standing there, in front of us! How on earth did they enter? They had a universal key, that's how. To Odile's and my surprise, they were looking for a young member, let's call him Freddy, who had lived with us, but had left the Church some time ago. Freddy was no spring chicken. He was wanted by the police for many things, mostly robbery. Well, he had robbed us, too. He stole a camera from one brother and took off with the cash register, the money for the Center's expenses.

We didn't know anything about him and didn't want to know anymore about him, either. The policemen didn't believe us. They had to make sure for themselves. So they went to the bedrooms and looked in all the corners to assure themselves that Freddy wasn't hiding in the closet. And there we were, with one policeman leaning against a bunk-bed and asking for our papers. Some very sleepy sisters were grabbing their passports, while grumbling and mumbling. "What is this—a youth hostel?" one of the policemen asked me. To have so many people in one apartment is obviously against the law in Germany. Then inspiration just came from the Great, Great Beyond and I stood

there, firm, and with conviction I said, "Well, we are a couple of international friends and we visit each other from time to time..."

That was good enough for the policeman. He left the bedroom. But he sure had enjoyed seeing so many women in their pyjamas. And really, it wasn't a lie. All in all, Freddy turned out to have been an expensive cominodity—first, he stole cash and valuables from us, and if that wasn't already enough, the police came looking for him at our Church Center as well.

Antonio the Handsome

At that juncture a new game player was thrown into the arena: an Italian, who had grown up in Germany, met the Unification Church in Germany and as a result of that, spoke German perfectly well—"Antonio the Handsome". Franco AI was in desperate need of a person like that, a true matrix between Italy and Germany, and Antonio the Handsome was just his man! When we moved into the new Center, Franco AI, together with Antonio the Handsome, decided that with a nice, new place like that, we should also have nice new furniture. Sounds logical, no? So the whole group was divided: one bigger group would go to the city and center of Regensburg to fundraisc the money for new furniture, while a smaller group would stay in Munich spending all of that money to buy the furniture. Guess in which group I was? Well, obviously I was with the money-making group.

We stayed six to seven weeks in Regensburg and fundraised and fundraised like world champions. Then, finally, the day had arrived to go back. Antonio, together with the other sisters who had stayed on, welcomed us with much joy, and with considerable pride he showed us around our new home. The furniture was simple, modern, in light colors and brand new! There was a nice feeling of *Look at it!... This is what you have been working for*. We all felt very happy and very fulfilled. It didn't really matter that most of the furniture was bought for the third floor—which was the "leader's floor"; we had a constant flow between the three floors, anyway. Still, there was a deep satisfaction within everyone, because our hard-earned money had been spent well, and we could see the substantial result of it daily. I think the Center in Munich in that respect was rather the exception than the rule—many a good brother or sister was lost, because they never could partake in the banquet; they never knew where their hard-earned money went, and they themselves continued to live in misery. After a while even the most faithful

person feels betrayed. I had been lucky; more than once in my life I came to know both sides—the money-making and the money-spending side. One cannot appreciate public money if one has never suffered to earn one's pay. On the other hand, if one only lives to pay taxes and never gets to spend some of the tax money, one feels used and usually ends up becoming resentful.

Clever Elena

With the improvement of our living situations, Clever Elena's internal mood improved daily and her internal clouds began to disappear, until they were all gone by the time the Blessing came around. We were the German Unification Center of Munich, but basically nobody spoke any German; the official language was broken English. That is, either you had, "Look, itsa like diss..." or you had "Ehhh...please...can you...please...", and the few Germans had to handle all the contact with the German population. Franco Al, on the other hand, was as smart as you would expect a true Godfather to be—he hired himself a German teacher, "a pretty young thing", college graduate and all—who gave him private lessons. Once he had to give a public speech in German and he did well, spoke well, pronounced well—he was a marvel to behold. He publicly acknowledged his German teacher, gave credit where credit was due, which is also quite unusual for a Unification Church leader. The rest of the Italians and Japanese had to make due with me: we had a German class in the morning—it was a torture, for them, for me, for everybody.

Come Sunday morning, every Unification Church Center anyplace in the world, has a Sunday Service. We were no different. What was different was that the Sunday Service in Munich was held in English by Clever Elena. Since the Unification Church of Munich had a strong elderly community, with quite a few parents of members and elderly people who had become members out of their own effort, we had to have German translation. And that was me, the German translator! Every Sunday morning Elena was up front—and me right there beside her. We were a good team. Elena's English had reached a certain level of perfection—she was rather small, but very distinguished-looking, and did she ever have a sharp mind!

One learns a lot through translating. A true translator does not put his own opinion into the field, a true translator is an

instrument through which the message is channeled to everyone present. A true translator captures the heart of the speaker. "What is it he wants to say?" "Which feeling does he want to transmit?" "What's the priority of the message?" A true translator does not lose himself with "What's the right word for this?" If the right word doesn't come, he has to find a way to explain the context, the meaning. After a while, one feels very close to the person one is translating for; an understanding grows at a very deep level.

I did simultaneous translations as well—they were very common in the Unification Church. While someone was talking up front, I was sitting in the back with a group of brothers and sisters and translating from German to English, or from English to German, depending on who was talking and who was listening. In order to be able to do that, you have to empty yourself completely, so that the message can run through you, just like water. The speaker doesn't stop speaking, so you have to listen to one language and speak in another all at the same time. It wasn't easy and it is quite tiring. In Unification Church Centers all over the world this was common practice, since we were always an international bunch. And the leader in charge would call the person with the best knowledge of both languages and just tell him, "Please—sit over here and translate for everybody else!" In truly international meetings, like the Blessing for example, there were different groups with different translations going on at the same time. It is just like the Seven-Day Fast: one has to do it with a young, fresh mind and body. With the years, concentration dwindles and these intellectual acrobatics become more and more difficult.

Street Preaching, or How I was shouting all over the Pedestrian Area

We had one crazy, totally nutty brother with us, let's call him Fernando, he came to us as a "gift" from another European country—they were a very conservative Unification Church (if there is such a thing) and he was just too much to handle for them. In the course of time, I found out why. Somehow his birthday fell during the very first days he arrived at our Center in Munich and he decided to celebrate it his way—by street-preaching in the pedestrian area of Munich. Since I was the one with the best knowledge of English, I was chosen to translate. Fernando, being Italian, was obviously speaking, no let me rephrase that, *screaming* in English—and I was supposed to do the German translation.

It was afternoon and there weren't a whole lot of people in the streets—maybe it was a holiday, I don't remember anymore. What I do remember is Fernando, standing on a public chair in the tourist area and me, standing on another chair beside him, both screaming at the top of our lungs to the passers-by who couldn't care less! Nobody even glanced our way! Fernando was by no means shy, mind you. He just went on and on. It seemed he was talking about the whole of the *Divine Principle*, from beginning to end. After about three hours, Fernando decided that his birthday had been celebrated in the right, dignified fashion, and we went home. I had a splitting headache and my voice was destroyed for a couple of days, and no—I never volunteered again to translate for Fernando.

That wasn't the only street-preaching experience I had; we did this often with varying results. The only real crowd we assembled was whenever some obnoxious middle-aged man stood in front of us and screamed his own lungs out, about how we were this terrible sect and how we didn't have anything to do with Jesus or Christianity or the like. That was what the people wanted to hear!

They all stood and stared. Something was happening, even though no one really knew what we were shouting about so loudly, me (translating) on one side, and this Bavarian screaming on the other. Ah well, it takes a lot to shake people out of their complacency!

Once our whole Center stayed around the book-table we always set up in the pedestrian area to witness, and everybody had to give a lecture in the open air, right there on the spot. It didn't matter that most of our brothers and sisters didn't speak sufficient German to be understood by the passers-by. There they were—Italians, Japanese and a Korean sister too—mostly lecturing in English. We had carried our small whiteboard to the pedestrian area as well—we had it just for that purpose, to give open-air lectures. I remember one Japanese brother who was screaming his lungs out—in Japanese! Right there in the pedestrian area of Munich, passers-by could be witness to the reason why the Japanese were taking over the world: there was no stopping this high-spirited Japanese with his incredible guts! But then again, it was winter, it was cold, and we had to be there from early morning until the evening. At one point the Japanese sisters assembled a choir and sang a few songs in Japanese—it warmed all of our hearts. To our delight and surprise, one passer-by actually gave them a few coins! It made us all laugh. Well, they didn't sing that badly, after all.

"Hell no—we won't go" or How I learned to Demonstrate

One of the advantages of having joined the Unification Church was the fact that one was so protected from the sleaziness of this world. Imagine my utter surprise then, when on one fine morning at the end of 1981, in October, we were all asked to go to Bonn to participate in a demonstration. What was this all about? Well, do you want to have the long version, the short version or the Unificationist version? Here then is the Unificationist version: We had one incredibly fine Korean leader, who went by the name of "Tiger Park". He was Rev. Chung Goo Park, but everyone called him "Tiger Park". I say "was", because unfortunately, in 1982, he died of cancer. He was very young, in his early forties.

Tiger Park was the embodiment of CARP in the United States; he was their leader and they loved and worshipped him. He accomplished something which was truly difficult: he fought in a very real way against leftist advances on United States campuses in the late Seventies and early Eighties. There were teams of all-married sisters, who were asked to leave their babies and small children with their husbands or other relatives to do CARP work on the campuses. I talked with one of these sisters once—they were my absolute heroes—she just had had a baby and was still breast-feeding, and she told me how much her breasts hurt and how she had to pump the milk out of her body, because there was no baby to breastfeed. I admired these sisters very much and right then and there I decided, if I was ever asked to do something similar, of course I would do it. A Unification Church story has it that at one point a very mad leftist went right up to Tiger Park, waving a gun under his nose with the promise that he would kill him if he didn't stop meddling with other people's affairs. Tiger Park stood firm and challenged him: "Okay, shoot me! I will go straight up to heaven and you will be my

assassin!" The man had guts. That's why everybody worshipped him.

Now, this very same Tiger Park showed up in Germany and established himself—and CARP—big time. In Munich we were less than twenty Unification Church members, but CARP opened a center with sixty members. In other German cities the situation was similar. This was all happening in the middle of the Cold War. We had the "Evil Soviet Empire", Ronald Reagan was still fresh as U.S. President, and as of yet hadn't introduced "Star Wars", and in Germany the Social-democratic Coalition of Helmut Schmidt was in government. I don't remember all of the details anymore, the fact is, that the "Evil Soviet Empire" was going to install—or had already installed—some SS 20 ballistic missiles on East German soil. This was no friendly gesture, their purposes were pretty evident. The United States, NATO, the West German Government were all decided on one thing: "If you've got your SS 20s, we've got our Pershings." It was agreed then, that some Pershing ballistic missiles were to be installed on Western German soil. And guess what? Everybody who was anybody was against it. And guess what else? Only we Unification Church members—and CARP obviously—were for it.

But we weren't the only group who was for the installation. There were leaflets finding their way through pedestrian areas, which read: "Better a Pershing in the garden, than an SS 20 on the roof." So for once, then, the Unification Church wasn't the only group "peeing beside the pot", as they say in Argentina. Still, the leftists were organizing one big demonstration in Bonn *against* the installment of the Pershings, and the demonstrators would be coming from all over Europe to Bonn. CARP, on the other hand, was organizing one big demonstration *for* the installation of the Pershings, and the demonstrators were all Unification Church members, and came from all over Germany. The two demonstrations were supposed to have happened on the same day—but that was too much to handle for the city of Bonn, so they gave us permission to do our demonstration the day before "the big one". And there we were, all Unificationists shipped in from wherever. I myself came with a group from Munich, to demonstrate for the installation of the missiles.

What the heck did I care about the Pershings! Here I was,

squeezed between a couple of mad Japanese, who were shouting at the top of their voices! It was a real demonstration: there were banners, there were megaphones and we were shouting slogans in unison all through the beautiful little streets of Bonn, until we finally ended up at the market square (I guess), where Dieter Schmidt, the German CARP leader, gave a public speech. I felt so embarrassed! Was I glad when this whole spectacle was finally over. I had joined the Unification Church to avoid mixing with these kind of people and here I was, forced to participate in a demonstration.

After the official part was finished, we all met up in a big public park, food was handed out and Tiger Park was present as well. That was it, for us Church members. I remember that we went in the same car back to Munich. But the CARP members stayed on. Having permission or not, they went out the next day and had their demonstration for the installation of the Pershings, in the middle of the demonstration against the installation—they were a small island of a couple of hundred in a huge sea of a couple of thousand against them. One CARP sister later told me what happened. Of course, they did not go unnoticed—the real heavy duty leftist demonstrators were threatening them, telling them to pack up and leave, or else... Our CARP members stood tall and preferred "or else"...some were actually beaten up. There were CARP sisters present as well, and the situation was really dangerous. Then, when the whole battle was finished, they all went to Camberg to celebrate. And Tiger Park told them something more or less like this: "You risked your lives out there fighting with the Communists, now we will celebrate our victory! Our band, the Blue Tuna band, which is our pride, will play for us all night and everybody will sing and dance all night long." And this is what they did! This was highly unusual Unification Church behavior! But then again, those brothers and sisters had truly risked their lives and Tiger Park recognized that and appreciated it and wanted to give them their rightly deserved reward. He was a true leader. He had the charisma of true leadership—he was asking a high price of his followers, but he gave them their rightly deserved recognition as well! People like that are one in a million. Unfortunately, he died so very young.

Three weeks among the Lakes

Our "Don Franco" organized some very nice 21-day seminars for us in Italy. Because of Unification Church politics for which, on German soil, a 21-day seminar for the Italian region could not be had, the seminars were set up in Italy in the fine city of Varese.

Yes, it was the very same place I went to when I was in Jeannine's fundraising team. I loved that place, it was a former hotel, a true tourist place up on a hill, and one could see far, far into the Northern Italian landscape. Standing on the balcony, one saw some of the nicest lakes of northern Italy, seven in all. In the hotel garden were palm trees, nice plants and everything was very well taken care of. Obviously, the place had its proper owners before and wasn't yet run-down, which was so very typical for pure Unification Church buildings and ventures.

From Munich to Varese we went with one of our minivans, heading straight south—and crossed Liechtenstein. Well, one has to be told that one is entering and exiting Liechtenstein. We drove all around the castle and then we went on to Switzerland, where we stopped at the house of Unification Church members. Very much in the mountains, the house was practically carved into a slope, and I imagined it in winter-time. These people would be totally snowed in! You wouldn't be able to walk out of there anymore! It wasn't practical, not in my understanding. It was like entering a different world. There was a very prominent fireplace and solid benches around the living room. I never had seen a room like that before. The grandmother, who was the mother-in-law of one of our brothers, showed us with considerable pride a cushion filled with cherry pits, to be warmed up on top of the fireplace, obviously in winter, when the fire was under way. Supposedly, it kept you warm for hours. I believed it, I had no way to prove the contrary. It was the kind of place that invites you to stay.

The workshop site in Varese had an enormous kitchen—truly

a hotel kitchen. It was so very different from everything we were used to in the Church. We had our lectures, we made our excursions—I've kept a beautiful photo from the sunset on the lake, the kind of photo you blow up and make into a poster, the kind of photo you put in a nice frame and hang up on the wall. We were a select group. Anja from Flatland was with me, and we all had a very nice time. It was May 1982, and we had beautiful weather as well.

Every Saturday night, of course, we had the Entertainment. There was one couple who stood out. They were a married couple, who had met the Unification Church and had joined the movement, Graziella and Salvatore—and they were very, very funny. The funny one was the husband, Salvatore. Small and skinny, he was something like the caretaker of the property. Graziella, on the other hand, was also small, but very, very chubby, corpulent, oversized! But she told us all the time that when they got married, she was this skinny little thing. Nobody really believed her. They were so funny together!

One Saturday night with different groups doing different sketches, Graziella and Salvatore ventured into the world of "Cinterotonda". Their "Cinderella" was small and chubby, and wanted to be tall and skinny. We had a "fairy godfather" (who was Salvatore, of course), who told Cinterotonda he could change her into a beautiful tall skinny damsel for the Prince's ball, but she had to be home by the strike of twelve. They exchanged Graziella with another tall, skinny sister in basically the same clothes and with the *handsome Principe*, they danced and danced. Cinterotonda forgot the time, forgot the twelve o'clock mark, forgot everything and bibbeddi, babbeddi, boo! There she was, changed back into "Cinterotonda", right in front of the horrified eyes of the *Principe*, who fainted. One totally distraught Cinterotonda cried helplessly at home with the fairy godfather at her side: "Now the *Principe* will not want me anymore because I'm so fat! Oh, I'm never going to get married!" "Don't worry," said the fairy godfather, "if the *Principe* will not marry you, I will marry you!"

It was so sweet and so true. When my children want to hear a bedtime story, I tell them the story of "Cinterotonda"—which is much more real to me than Cinderella.

Six weeks with my closest friends from all over Europe

Every now and then we had a forty-day workshop. By 1983 the most promising brothers and sisters were called from all over Europe to have their forty-day workshop. Nowadays they call them seminars, but back then we just used to call them workshops. I guess I got chosen because I was one of the German "lecturers"—there were so few around at that time and we were all assembling in Camberg. In forty days you get a lot of lectures; many of the things I learned then are still with me now, and I'm the better for it. Besides the regular *Divine Principle* lectures, we had lectures on *Unification Thought*, on *Victory over Communism* and we had the entire Bible explained in one full day. I loved it! I had never seen a university from the inside and it was the closest one could ever get to it.

Everything was in English, everyone was speaking, lecturing, talking, explaining and expounding in English. I made notes and notes and notes—I still have them somewhere. With us, or rather heading the workshop, was Rev. Young Whi Kim, one of the original first three couples blessed in our Church in 1960. He himself wrote *Study Book on the Divine Principle*, but we didn't get to see much of him and his wife; they were attended to in "Farmer's Cozy Corner". So here we were, from Finland to Malta, from Iceland to Portugal, "sliced and diced" in seven different groups. There was enough time to have a choir, with a British sister in charge, and a folk dance group, with an Austrian sister teaching us the steps of "Troika" (all Russian) and a couple of other group dances. I was part of both groups, no problem.

This feeling of being inside of a university came to me especially with the *Unification Thought* lectures, because this book was a remodeling of the *Divine Principles*, to make them appealing and interesting to students of other philosophies. The whole *Unification Thought* is packed with terminology only a person of

higher learning will appreciate: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and things like that. Still, it was very interesting to me, because the person in charge of the lectures, a German who had been a couple of years in the United States, tried to teach on our level so that *we* could actually understand it, without ever having studied philosophy. You get a big sophisticated vision of "the Creator" and another sophisticated vision of "the Creation", with a new understanding of "Human Nature" and "Divine Character", and grand concepts like that. The writer of all this world of sophistication, Dr. Sang Hun Lee, has become really popular among us Unification Church members, especially now since he is dead and gone—he's dead, but he's not gone. I remember that at one point *Unification Thought* teaches that we all have to turn into "good, respectable and decent Citizens of a New World Order"—which really stuck with me. Now my husband and I spend all of our days working like crazy to pay the bills, all of the bills—and the taxes, all of the taxes, like the good citizens we are! I don't know if that was exactly "the Vision" that Dr. Lee had in mind—but measured by that standard, we are outstanding citizens!

Then we had *Victory over Communism* from an American brother, who basically taught us the principles of Communism the way it was thought up by Karl Marx. These were the Eighties, and Communism was still in its heyday. He would make all kinds of drawings of the "World According to Karl Marx and Co." with our *Divine Principle* understanding as a counter-proposal. From all of that I remember kindergarten-style drawings of the chick fighting against the eggshell "to be born and to be free". Did anybody actually believe that nonsense?

And one of these forty days was dedicated to a brother from Mauritius (where the heck is the island of Mauritius located, anyway?). He was the pinnacle of sophistication. With a university degree in French Literature, he explained to us all of the books of the Bible, starting with the Old Testament and finishing right up with the Revelation—by then it was 10 P.M. though, and only the ones who were really interested had remained—like me. He used such a select language in English—I could only imagine how his French was.

There is another detail I will never forget—we were introduced to George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. George Orwell's 1984, I had read, but *Animal Farm*, that was a new one to me. As part of the recreational program in the evenings, we saw an animated movie of how the animals took over the corrupt farmer's farm, elected the horse and other hard-working animals as their leaders, which gave them hope. Then, bit by bit, the pigs, with the help of the wolves, took over, and created a new pig culture, and altered all of the rules formerly established by the community of animals and created a pig super-race.

One obviously relates this whole exposure to the world of Communism, but I guess George Orwell's vision was much bigger than this—that's the way many a revolution started and finished; that's the way many a reformation started and finished; that's the way many a culture, religion, company—actually many a human endeavor—started and finished! How wise this George Orwell was! He knew much and understood much.

A forty-day workshop like that, when you're all single, with no "Monday-to-Friday, eight-to-five" schedules to follow, is pure fun. The time we're talking about is between October and November of 1983 and before the workshop started, the coordinator told us that we should write down our birthdays because if they fell right at this period, they would be celebrated. And that's what they did. That's what they did with everyone else, except for me! It worked like this: after dinner, all of a sudden, the lights went out and a birthday cake with burning candles was brought through the dark to the lucky person. We all sang "Happy Birthday", the candles were blown out, some gift found its way to its new owner, and everybody was happy. And there I was, on my birthday, sitting and sitting and sitting, waiting and waiting and waiting—nothing. After just about everybody had left the dining room, I thought, *Oh well, I just slipped through the cracks... it happens.* But no, they hadn't forgotten me; my blessed team-leader didn't have enough pull to convince the kitchen staff to make the cake. At the usual evening group meeting, he gave me a miserable bar of chocolate, and his excuse was that everyone was preparing to go pioneering the following day, into select cities of Germany. Well, I forgave him. What I didn't forgive him though, was that my

team's city was Munich. That was insufferable! Everybody got the chance to go to a different city—and I had to go back to Munich? Apart from that, it was so embarrassing. Later I talked with a brother who was in the same situation as me, and he had just quietly switched places with another brother, so as not to go back to his own city for this "pioneering-witnessing-whatever" period. I just didn't have the guts to do that.

Life isn't fair, but there is justice! On that very same day of my birthday, a television program was broadcast all over Bavaria. In the summertime we had a television team in the Center in Munich and they did a documentary on us based on an interview with the parents of one Bavarian sister, who by then was God knows where, and that television team stuck with us for "family evenings" and camping workshops. They were so sweet, so friendly and so nice when they were with us, but the documentary turned out very negative. Like I mentioned earlier, it was broadcast right on my birthday and, believe it or not, two of my former guests were all flabbergasted by the notion of having seen me on television! They called up, they came back! They were an interesting young couple—they would just make enough money to be able to travel the world and when I was in contact with them, they had just come back from about six months in India with many photos and many stories to tell. Heck, I had become a celebrity! Fame is fickle, though. It was broadcast once and soon forgotten. I saw the video after the workshop—yes, it's true, I cut quite a prominent figure, but still, fifty percent of the video was focused on a very pretty blond sister, and the director did his utmost to charm her out of our Church. It didn't work, she was too smart for him.

It was a very nice forty-day workshop. I made many friends from different countries and we wrote to each other for quite some time after the workshop. The songs I learned, I can still sing; the dances, with a little bit of help, I can still dance, and the lectures had a lifelong impact on me.

The Time of Visitation

There was a special time in Munich, a very special time. It was the "Time of Revelation and Visitation". What had happened? Well, we have to go back to December of 1983. At one point, we received the terrible message that the second son of Rev. Moon, Heung Jin Nim (pronounced "Hoong Chin Nim"), had had a terrible traffic accident on the icy highway between New York City and our Unification Church Seminary in Barrytown, in the state of New York. He was driving in his car with two of his friends, one seated beside him and one in the back, when suddenly, on the other side of the road, a truck lost control and proceeded to hit the car right frontally. It was December 23rd and the road was icy. The truck would have had its most damaging effect hitting the seat of the accompanying person, but Heung Jin Nim, in a split-second, turned the wheels around and the truck hit him. The truck hit him hard, very hard. He fell into a coma, hung on to life for a couple of days and then, on January 2nd 1984, he died. His two friends who were with him in the car were hurt very badly, but they survived the accident. To all of us, to the whole international community of Unification Church members, there was no doubt whatsoever that he had given his life to save his friends. January 1st, "as the kind reader will remember," is God's Day, the most important of all Unification Church Holidays. Rev. Moon, to honor his son, declared January 2nd "The Day of Victory of Love". We have a more low-key commemoration service in the morning to remind everyone present of just what a great kind of guy this Heung Jin Nim was.

He wasn't just like that in death, he was like that in life, too. There is a story by Jin Sung Park Moon, the husband of In Jin Nim, one of Rev. Moon's elder daughters, which he told to children of Unification Church members at a seminar. Once, years ago, he told, they all went fishing together—Rev. Moon and the adults together with some of his children and all the young

folk. There were big boats and small boats. Obviously, Rev. Moon was in the biggest boat of them all. The other second-generation children, as we call our Unification Church offspring, were all in smaller boats. Life on the sea is tough and rough. There are ups and downs, highs and lows, vomiting here, vomiting there. Heung Jin Nim was to be found on the biggest boat, Rev. Moon's boat, "in case my Father needs my help", he had said. *Ha!* thought Jin Sung Nim, *easy-going, easy-going!* "But," said Jin Sung Nim, "one day, the sea was unbearable. Everyone was seeking shelter and they huddled together like little chicks in the rain. Only two people were out fishing: Father on one side—and Heung Jin Nim on the other. There they were, all day long, immobile, like stone figures." That's the kind of person he was! When he died, he was only seventeen years old.

By early 1984, Heung Jin Nim spiritually contacted brothers and sisters who had the gift to receive his spiritual messages and as time went on, he contacted more and more people in different parts of the world—the United States, England, Africa, practically everywhere in the whole world. There was always someone who would receive his messages, write them down and they were read to us. "The Time of Visitation" also reached the shores of Munich sometime between spring and summer of 1984. There was one brother in particular, let's call him Henrik, who received these messages from the "Other Side" and always wrote them down on a typewriter—well yes, we're still talking about a time before PCs, the "Stone Age". Apart from that, the good Henrik didn't know how to type with ten fingers, which was obvious—but hey, that has nothing to do with the story. Let's be serious! Henrik came to Munich on some sort of business mission—for the life of me, I can't remember which company he was working for. In any case, he was a much better medium than businessman! What I do remember is Henrik giving a Sunday Service once, him speaking in English, me translating into German, when he told us that Soren Kierkegaard and his grandmother had been very important people for him in his life of faith.

I remembered that now when Heung Jin Nim began to send his messages, they contained a lot of practical advice and were very valuable to us. He told us what he could see from the Other

Side that we weren't aware of—all the many mistakes we made, all of the small and big blunders leading us astray, into the wrong direction, without us ever noticing it. There were other people who gave us advice, too. Foremost of all of them, was Jesus, who introduced himself to us as "your older brother Jesus". Another one was Pater Ruppert Mayer. You had to be Catholic and from Munich to know him. Right in the middle of the pedestrian area, there is a chapel dedicated to him. He is the patron saint of Munich and its inhabitants, their "Fabulous Four from Liverpool", their St. Patrick, their Diego Maradona—well, you get the picture. This Pater Ruppert Mayer, a Catholic priest and a very gutsy man of his time, who lived in more or less open resistance against the Nazis, loved us very much and gave us a lot of advice as well. And then there were two more people—Soren Kierkegaard and Henrik's grandmother. That grandmother was a lot of fun. She apparently stood her ground against Heung Jin Nim and told us, through Henrik, that we sleep too little! Heung Jin Nim apparently told her, "Don't worry. They're young. They're strong. They have a lot of things to do." She wouldn't have any of it! "What does he know! I have children and grandchildren, I have a lot of experience!" Poor Heung Jin Nim. That little old granny knocked him flat!

She was right, though. We did sleep very little. Apart from that, we started with one of those prayer conditions, worthy of any martial arts, Shaolin-style temple. We had prayer chains from midnight to four o'clock in the morning. They were organized into groups of three or four who would pray, if I remember correctly, for one whole hour. Everybody, obviously, wanted to pray from midnight to one o'clock. But that most coveted time-slot was always taken! We had some elder sisters with us, married sisters, who were on a forty-day vacation from husband and family—well obviously it wasn't called "vacation", but was a "forty-day witnessing condition for blessed wives", and they would always pray between midnight and one o'clock in the morning. That was because some of them were pregnant. These sisters brought quite some pizzazz into the Center in Munich—not that life was boring at that particular time, but it was good to have had them around. But sure enough, we were always tired.

Some of these spirits who gave us guidance had been Christian saints, like Francis of Assisi or Catarina of Siena, for example. Others were quite unknown. There was one Jewish leader as well. Hal Shem Tov.

After a while, there was a whole group around Henrik. They would gather around on the top floor and had special meetings of which we were informed later. I wasn't part of that group, so I didn't really experience many of these special spiritual happenings first-hand. But, like everybody else, I believed them all. We all became very spiritual. The Spiritual World, Life after Death, the Great Beyond, the Other Side—it became as normal to us as doing the groceries at the local supermarket. And, on a worldwide level, there really was no end to be seen.

In Argentina, for example, the "Time of Visitation" was sometime in 1986, where one early member with a great spiritual "antenna" (but really not much sense for music), received lots and lots of songs about Heung Jin Nim; they were being sung by brothers who actually did understand something about music! In practically any part of the world, Heung Jin Nim manifested himself. Many "liberation ceremonies" happened as the result of that and many good things were brought into being. It was our Pentecost: "the spirit was poured out among the believers". A lot of seminars for spiritual cleansing followed in the coming years, and with the death of Mrs. Han, Mrs. Moon's mother—we call her "Dae Mo Nim"—a whole branch of Unification Church activities, dedicated only to spiritual phenomena, opened up.

Now the Spiritual World has become quite a natural part of the life of Unification Church families. Heung Jin Nim revolutionized the Spiritual World, but Dr. Sang Hun Lee organized it. Dr. Lee died in 1997 at the ripe age of 84 years. He had written the *Unification Thought* and the *Victory over Communism* material. What does a teacher do, when he dies? Well, chances are, he continues teaching. Dr. Lee didn't sit around with a big harp trying to perfect his "Hosanna" and "Hallelujah" singing—he tried to find the really important people in our Judeo-Christian history and some important people from world history as well, and told us through a medium how they were doing! And then he started to mention to all of these spirits that now there is a higher

truth available and yes, he would very much like to tell them all about it! Well, by now there is a whole system of seminars set up in the Spirit World. And if there is any doubt about Dr. Lee's messages, they are so well-organized, they come with titles and subtitles and are divided into different groups, just like his books! You can look them all up on the Internet and take your own sweet time to read and digest them.

As for Heung Jin Nim, among many other things, he made sure that spirits learn how to keep schedule. We are taught that spirits don't have a sense of time and space. I think it's a little bit like being in prison—if you're locked up for life with no hope of ever seeing the outside anymore, every day is the same: Monday is like Thursday, Friday is like Sunday. But, let's say there is a rock band scheduled to play in the prison next Wednesday night, at 8 P.M. sharp. You'll make sure you are there, and by 7:30 P.M.—there you are, washed, styled, combed and bright, shiny and bushy-tailed! If you have the attitude of, "Oh well, I don't care. I'll stay in my cell. Who gives a—" Then, unfortunately, you're really living in hell. From what we Unificationists understand, if ever there is a big Unification Celebration somewhere on the earth, there is also a big celebration simultaneously in the Spirit World. It's a kind of "giant hook-up" between the two worlds.

Oh yes, oh yes—I can see that expression in your face, that squint in your eyes—you don't believe any of it! But I tell you, if you had lived with us in the Center in Munich during the "Time of Visitation", the Great Beyond would be very natural to you—it would be part of your everyday life!

Crossing Over to the New World

After all of this, my time in Munich was coming to an end—I could feel it. And I always had this unbeatable, unquenchable desire to go to the "Land of Unlimited Possibilities", as they used to call the United States in Germany. The movement everywhere in the Unification Church was westward bound—one had to "go west young man", it was the center of activities, the Center of the Providence...one had to be there or be square. I was no different. I dreamed about being in the United States. I literally dreamed about it.

How did I finally end up in the United States? Well, I guess, it was just like everything else—the stream of life inevitably carries you to your destination. In the beginning of 1985, life in the Center in Munich had become very much a routine; Clever Elena now had a husband and a baby and consequently didn't live with us anymore. After Henrik had left Munich on a "secret mission", the "Time of Visitation and Revelation" had run its course, as well. There was Antonio the Handsome running the Regional Headquarters and Georgio running the Center. Did I ever mention Georgio? No? Georgio came from Sardinia, but looked every inch of an Arab, in fact I have a beautiful photo of Georgio dressed up as an Arab, and Jeannine's husband, no less, looking very convincing as a pirate. It was taken at one of our annual carnival parties which we organized for our guests, who were listening to the cycle of lectures.

Ah, those carnival parties... Lots of decorations, the band was always there to play, all kinds of games with prizes—and mostly organized by me. After a while, I was synonymous with entertainment. Clever Elena was ever wise and left me a lot of freedom—artistic freedom—to do, to play, to dance and to organize. She even allowed me to take some dance classes—local public courses, the first one being "Expressional Dance" and another one "Israeli and Greek Folk Dance". I would fundraise

the money for it, not just for myself; I would also make the money for another Italian sister, who accompanied me. These dances we would perform at our Church Holiday celebrations and whenever we had an entertainment evening. It was great publicity, we had lots of guests. But nobody really joined the Unification Church because of our outstanding rendition of the "Hashual", an Israeli folk dance, or because I was dancing a "Phoenix out of the Ashes" to the music from *Chariots of Fire*.

And that's where Georgio enters. He was a lot of fun. He did his very own outstanding rendition of "The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow" from the musical *Annie*. And on occasion we had the great honor of the incredible presence of Estella, the star—you remember Estella? Our Matching in Camberg? Her husband was one of our Italian brothers, so even though she was working in another city, she often came and visited us in Munich. Actually, she was very nice. Just that singing of hers, was...well, only for the connoisseurs of true art!

Well then, how did I come to the United States? Once, early in the year of 1985, I decided to take charge of a problem in my family—there is a "sick one" in every family, physically sick, mentally sick, emotionally sick—you name it. Usually we never think in terms of taking responsibility of the problem ourselves, we leave it up to the professionals—the doctors, the psychiatrists, the psychologists, the ones involved in the healing business. But a person who has reached a certain understanding about spiritual laws may, can and should take matters into their own hands.

And that's what I did! I didn't have a whole lot of options or choices, neither did I have the imagination to figure out what kind of special healing I could do—I just did something and offered it to the Living God. I read the *Divine Principle* aloud and with conviction in our small prayer room. I did this for forty days, always thinking about my sick relative. It was a spiritual battle. I felt the walls staring at me, laughing at me, and in my mind were echoing voices saying, "Ha! You think you can change something with that? You will never change anything! Give it up!" I was alone, very much alone. But then again, I was not alone! The forty days had passed. On the next day, at some time, Antonio the

Handsome mentioned to me that there was a new project being started in the United States and they were asked to name a German representative for it. Rev. Moon wanted to have a representative from every European country. Did I want to go to the United States to work on some sort of a magazine? Did I ever! What followed was a couple of nerve-racking "Yes-No-Yes-No" days, in which the different political forces of the Regional Headquarters in Munich and the National Headquarters in Frankfurt decided over my fate. In the end, I boarded that plane to New York City...

Whenever I was asked how on earth I got to work at *The World & I* magazine in Washington, D.C., I gave the "official" story: that I had done an apprenticeship in a German publishing company and that working in the commercial field of magazines was my learned profession, before I had joined the Unification Church full-time. And since they were looking for a German representative, I was just the right person for the job. That's the official story—everyone inside and outside the Unification Church accepted that explanation—it was all so logical. But that's not the real reason why I was chosen. Apart from that, a Unification Church leader doesn't look at CVs. Chances are that neither in Munich, nor in Frankfurt, were they aware of my professional background. A Unification Church leader, when confronted with a decision, prays and asks God for guidance.

The real reason was that forty-day condition I had undertaken—the one I made to heal the wounds, and to find the answers to the problems. There is a cause for things. And there are effects to be seen. The Living God is so incredibly grateful that if we take matters in our own hands and try at least to solve our own problems, He will give us what we most desire.

And what about the sick relative? Some things take the investment of a life-time. "It's like a marriage," as an ex-President of Argentina would say, "there are good times, there are bad times, one has to stick them out together." That's how my years in Munich, in all of Bavaria—in fact, in all of Germany—ended. I was westward bound, to new shores and a new life.

Of all oldie forty Holy Songs, there is a most popular one, the first song one really learns upon joining the Unification Church,

the one we sang when we came together to pray, and we all knew by heart. Apart from that, it was Heung Jin Nim's song:

Song of the Garden

The Lord into His garden comes,
The spices yield a rich perfume;
The lilies grow and thrive,
The lilies grow and thrive.
Refreshing showers of Grace Divine
From the Father flow to every vine
And make the dead revive,
And make the dead revive.

Oh that this dry and barren ground
In springs of water may abound;
A fruitful soil become,
A fruitful soil become.
The desert blossoms as the rose,
When the Saviour conquers all His foes,
And makes His people one,
And makes His people one.

Come breth'ren you that love the Lord,
And taste the sweetness of His Word;
In Father's ways go on,
In Father's ways go on.
Our troubles and our trials here
Will only make us richer there,
When we arrive at home,
When we arrive at home