

The Heart of a Pioneer Missionary – Part 5

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Members greet True Parents' arrival in Germany, April 1969

As we continued witnessing, many students responded and came to the center. Being the only teacher, I sometimes had to use some ingenuity to bridge certain situations. I would teach two students for an hour, and then two or three more students came in. While briefing the new students about the basics, I had to involve the other two students and keep them interested to hear more. Often three or four times different groups came in and I had to capture their attention by making my talks really interesting to the benefit of all guests present. This was a gigantic task, but the spirit of God really moved these people and I experienced time and again the power of the truth, the Divine Principle.



Bernhard Meierhofer offers a gift to True Parents in Vienna 1969 (Emilie Steberl is at back)

Once a group of 12 students from different faculties of the university came to the center. One was a student of art, who later taught at the Academy of Art in Vienna, one studied architecture, others dentistry, physics, computer science. We had them all, very intelligent people. They all sat down very politely, wondering what I had to say. I sent a prayer to Heavenly Father, to really inspire me to capture the hearts and minds of these young people, realizing that they would be able to do great works for God. Then I began to talk very dynamically for six hours straight. Nobody voiced any criticism, they just listened and listened. After my presentation every one of them came and shook my hand, deeply moved in their hearts.

They all came back and joined, except one, who was an American. He was a little stubborn but somewhat later he accepted too, and became a missionary in South Africa. That opened up the universities for us. All those students belonged to a certain fraternity, the "Gilde Thule" and they immediately started to proclaim the Principle to their fellow students. While some of them were very positive, others rejected everything and split the fraternity apart. We then began to give lectures regularly at two universities. Winfried Schwarzl was the main lecturer at the Technical University and very instrumental in moving ahead with the student groups, while Harald Unger lectured the Principle to students at the University for Agriculture and Botany.



True Parents in Vienna on April 5, 1969 (Schlüsselgasse Center)

More and more students visited our center. Once a group of graduate students from different faculties, physics, chemistry, medicine, philosophy, etc., who had all received the first chapter from me previously, came to discuss the contents of the first chapter. Obviously they had come to criticize the contents and to tear it to pieces. They introduced themselves with their name and faculty, and the first one began to discuss the first chapter from the standpoint of physics. His copy was marked with his comments in red ink, and I saw no point in confronting these half a dozen PhD students head-on. I therefore decided to lead them into the spiritual realm and started talking about the mission of Jesus and the return of Christ. The change I witnessed was unbelievable. They forgot their technical questions and were completely captivated by the high spiritual atmosphere and the new revelation. They opened their hearts and the spirit of God could really move. After a few hours we closed with a prayer meeting and instead of realizing their intentions of destroying everything, they walked out with a grateful heart and God could win the victory.

As our family expanded, we checked out many types of business ventures to build a sound financial foundation. Since we had several trained kindergarten teachers in the family we decided to open up a kindergarten and nursery. After we rented the proper facilities we renovated the rooms and installed many little sinks and toilets in compliance with all the rules and regulations. In the evenings at home, family members made little dolls and other toys for the children and each one contributed to this venture according to his or her abilities with great joy. We also bought tables and chairs for children and little cots for their afternoon nap. Everything was well prepared, and in Jan. 1968 we opened up our private kindergarten "Ingeborg" in the Pyrker gasse in Vienna, a very good, middle to upper class neighborhood. Within a short time 45 children were registered and even doctors recommended our kindergarten to parents whose children had psychological problems.

We really worked with those children, pouring out much love, and the results were amazing. We also taught English, because some of our children came from families of foreign diplomats. Soon we had more children than our facilities could accommodate, and our waiting list got longer all the time. At the end of the year we seriously thought of expansion, but a year later my family and I were transferred to Germany and the kindergarten was closed.

On March 3, 1968, I took Bernhard Maierhofer to Zurich, Switzerland. He was the first foreign missionary sent out from Austria.

On October 30, 1968 I sent Emmi Steberl Lee as the first missionary behind the Iron Curtain. Emmi grew up in Bratislava, Slovakia and was determined to bring the Principle to her people. She was very devoted to God and True Parents, ready to put her life on the line for the mission. As I took her to the border of this strongly communist country, I could clearly feel the danger and fear from the other side. After we parted, Emmi walked to the checkpoint, where her papers were controlled and her luggage thoroughly checked. She proceeded crossing the strip of “no man’s land” and entered a bus, parked in the distance. As I saw her disappear, tears came to my eyes and I prayed to Heavenly Father for her protection and guidance.



43 Couples Blessing

People behind the Iron Curtain are really longing for the truth and are well-prepared to receive the Messiah. Within a short time, she had found her first disciples and was in desperate need of Principle material. She began travelling back and forth in intervals, taking the Principle along, always a few pages at a time, at the risk of her life. But she had such a deep trust in God and was sure of His protection, and she experienced just that, many times.

Once she packed quite a lot of material, since the members there were translating the book into their native language and needed the material to complete the task. After a strong prayer she was on her way, and the next time she came to Germany, she told us what happened. At the border everybody was told to leave the bus and identify their luggage. The guards took great pains to turn the contents of each suitcase upside down, and it looked like she was in deep trouble this time. She prayed and put her life into God’s hands. But when it was her turn to open her suitcase, the guard looked at her and waved his hand, telling her to load her luggage back into the bus. It was so incredible and she could hardly believe it herself. She immediately gave thanks to Heavenly Father for this miracle.

On another occasion the border guard checked her bag and saw the books at the bottom. She explained to him that she was a student of philosophy and needed to read the books during her vacation time. It was a very dangerous situation each time she crossed the border.

When Christel and I had already transferred to Germany in 1969, we printed their translation of the Divine Principle and she again brought the books over there, a few pages at a time. We supplied her members with clothing and other items and gave her money to buy a car to be able to get around faster.

They had to be on guard at all times, however. There was no easy way for all the members to meet in one place. The only possibility was in nature. Early Sunday mornings, weather permitting, they went out hiking and had their Pledge service on the mountain side. They sang and shared together and had a picnic in God’s beautiful creation. For some time, everything developed very well, but later the authorities [secret police] raided all their centers, confiscating the printing equipment and all their other material.

The members were all arrested. One of them died while incarcerated at the law court building. More than twenty members spent time in prison.

Emmi herself was not there at that time, but the authorities knew her name and she couldn’t return. In 1975, she was blessed with a Korean brother, Mr. Lee, in the 1800 couples blessing and stayed in Korea with her husband. On Dec. 23, 1981 Emmi died of cancer and is now in spirit world. She worked very

hard, always focused on her mission, her heart completely centered upon God and True Parents. She was quite a fighter for God.



True Parents speaking with Reiner Vincenz on their arrival in Germany in 1969

In November 1968 we opened up our third center in Vienna, in the Schluesselgasse. In this center I translated the “Divine Principle and Its Application” by Dr. Young Oon Kim into the German language. During the daytime I taught and took care of the family and translated the book during the night. It was a most beautiful experience. So far we had used a very simple book, but this Study Guide really opened our eyes. It was like a new revelation. While translating the book, spirit world really came down. All those beautiful spirits were anxious to know more of the truth. My horizon was expanded as well, and I could feel my way into the words of God. With the help of this book, teaching the Principle became easier and still more exciting. When I stopped working at 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., I went into the meeting room for a short prayer offering everything to Heavenly Father and expressing my gratitude for His help while translating the book.



Paul Werner with True Parents 1969

Later, during my mission in Germany, I had the opportunity to translate Pres. Hyo Won Eu’s manuscript of the Divine Principle into German. That again was a wonderful experience and a giant step forward in our comprehension of the Principle.

In March 1969 we went to Essen, Germany with all our family members to receive our True Parents on their second world tour.

On March 28, 1969, Christel and I were blessed by True Parents as couple number four at the Falkenheim in Essen [part of the 43 Couples' Blessing, divided between three nations]. For the first two years of my mission in Austria, Christel and Klaus had stayed behind in Germany. Since we joined the movement in 1963 we lived as brother and sister, after being married for 12 years before we joined. That wasn't so easy either. But with the blessing a new epoch in our lives began.

On March 26, 1969, just before the blessing, Father surprised us with a new mission. He told me: "Paul, you now become the leader of the German movement, and Peter, you take over the Austrian family.

When I assembled my members and broke the news to them, tears started to flow. We had a close knit family and loved each other very much, since they were all our spiritual offspring. I gave them all the love I had, but this was Father's will and I therefore had no second thoughts at all. I immediately focused on the German nation and the great task to love Germany as much as I loved Austria.



43 Couples Blessing, 1969

We took care of all necessary changes, especially as far as legalities were concerned, and prepared the centers and the family for the forthcoming visit of our True Parents and their party. In April (Easter) 1969 we received our True

Parents at the Vienna Airport. Father and Mother spent a few days in Vienna, visiting different points of interest, such as the TV-Tower, providing a magnificent view of the city, but mainly sharing their time with all the members in our big meeting room. We had a very blessed time together. Father and Mother were pouring out so much love, teaching us for hours, singing and laughing with us.

On May 11, 1969 Peter Koch transferred his mission to me. Concerning our mission in Austria, many things could be shared. Many of our early members were later scattered all over the world and are very solid and stable missionaries, great instruments for our Heavenly Father.

On May 18, 1969, exactly after four years to the day, I transferred my mission and some fifty family members to Peter Koch, and we moved to Germany, starting with just a few members, and tried to build up that nation.

I can truly say, I succeeded in loving Germany as much as I did Austria.