

## **We Are Definitely at Home in Mauritania**

A 1975 Unification Church Missionary  
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*Chinguetti Mosque, Mauritania*

We have been here quite some time now, and are definitely at home here. In fact, it is difficult to remember how I used to view certain things prior to my coming here. Just when I think back to all the things I did when I first arrived, the way I reacted to things and the way we lived, I know something has changed. But it is still difficult to really understand this until one sees some sort of a guide to measure by.

This week I have received two such guides. One was my letters printed in *The Way of the World*. I had to pause and think what it was like to look at this strange new country, and to come here full of shock and dismay at the new situation. I began to wonder if I am just beginning to get accustomed to the things I see here, or if the familiarity lessens some of the bite of the impressions I get. Then I got a letter from a friend in Washington. She wrote how moved she was by the way we are living here and the situation that we are in, in relation to her work in, as she calls it, "the marbled hallways with chandeliers."

I was at first a little curious as to how this impression came through in the States. I looked over to my Japanese brother and said, "It's not that bad here, is it?" But I had to stop and think. I remembered the sort of sick feeling I had in my stomach when I first saw our old room. I remember a lump coming to my throat while still in New York, when I looked at a picture of Mauritania, which, if I saw it today, would

not impress me in the least.

Our outlook has changed so much without our even knowing it. Those who view our situation from the outside see it from a totally different standpoint, one which is indeed much more heart-moving than it seems while in the midst of it. When I heard that one of the fellows from Sunburst was looking at the picture of where we used to live with tears in his eyes and that he spoke of how it is the kind of place to really learn of God, I looked at myself and said, "How come I don't feel so emphatic in the same way?"

I think it is something that I won't totally understand until I have left here. It is because of purpose. I think at this point, that is the best way to describe it. That also is the essential thing that makes our ability to handle the situation here so different from all the other foreigners here. Most of them are somehow nearly neurotic (maybe not so severe, but at least miserable) because of their having to be here.

It is the same thing that differs in our life in general from that of others. They are here because they don't want to be, and in many cases they live life with the same attitude. We have a purpose. It doesn't matter if this is a marbled hallway or a mud hut, it is the same purpose, and in the same heart. For this reason I have a difficult time being moved to tears.

Don't get me wrong. I don't think this is bad; quite the contrary, I think it is great. It gives those who have these feelings the opportunity to feel the chance to express God's heart in their tears, and to know how God feels when He looks at man. It also gives them the chance to look at themselves and their own situation from a different standpoint, just as hearing of their response gives me the opportunity to look at my situation differently. Thus we share. I see a little more how all of us in our different jobs can relate a bit better. We are one unit, not a bunch of loose parts flung in all different directions.

I am still moved by the life of the people here, but from a different level. I also see the other side of the coin; that tends to make me less sensitive to some of what I see, simply because I know what it really means to them, according to their standard.