

The Unity Factor as a Basis for National Restoration of Burkina Faso

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October 11, 2017

Unification Church Missionary to Burkina Faso (1975-1996)



Rev. and Mrs. Kenichi Ito in early missionary days

I found my first difficulty was not with the physical environment of the country: the climate, the food, or the language. It was a problem of unity with the other missionaries. I was obliged to live face to face with the Occidental culture, and I couldn't escape from the situation. My German sister was young when our mission began, and rather spiritual, but she had a pure mind and she was always obedient. The American brother was, well, very, very American.

We had our horoscopes done in both the Western and the Oriental manner, and found that we should harmonize quite well. But

reality was a different thing altogether. Once, the World Missions Director visited us and said, "You three are each special extreme types of characters. This means you must study and learn from each other, and your situation will become better." But we couldn't, and the indemnity course of our personal struggles continued for four or five years.

During these difficult months we tried talking with each other about our different ways of thinking, our different customs, and our own lives of faith. Through this process I began to understand that the only solution is to have a parental heart. The unity problem was, in fact, our heavenly training ground to help restore our parental hearts, to serve as indemnity for some of our fallen nature, and to make us international citizens.

I held many successive 40-day prayer conditions at our Holy Ground in the forest near Ouagadougou, the capital city. I prayed on sunny days, rainy days, and windy days for unity and for the restoration of the nation. I had many deep experiences with God and Father there. During these difficult moments, the Holy Ground was the only place I could escape to and find comfort.



A traditional village in Burkina Faso during the time of the early missionary work (1970s)

Looking back on these experiences, I realized that success and results don't come immediately, but only after sacrifice and suffering. It is a repayment for our dedication. I also realized that God's response to our petition in prayer will come only after a certain interval. I came to understand the importance of successive daily conditions and patient effort even when there is no instant result.

Soon after the coup in August 1983, we said goodbye to each other in our mission country of Burkina Faso for the last time. The American brother had his mission changed to the Ivory Coast, and our German sister went to Zaire to join her husband there.

We could not easily separate without heartfelt tears. It was especially difficult for them to leave this country where they had poured out their sweat and tears during the whole of their twenties.

The German sister loved Burkina Faso so much. She had lived in the country almost ten years, and that was the longest she had stayed in any country, even her native Germany. Her father had been in the diplomatic service, and they had moved around a great deal.

We were the three original missionaries, and we had stayed together for nine years and a few months. That must be some kind of record! I must admit that our love and unity was not always so strong.

I think a certain time period had concluded for us, and God wanted to ask from us a higher level of sacrifice and responsibility to save Africa and the world. We must apply our lessons from these years of experience in Burkina Faso to contribute to a higher level of the providence.

With deepest gratitude to Heavenly Father and True Parents, I thank you, my American brother and German sister. Your efforts of sweat and tears in service to Burkina Faso will eternally stay in this country.



Rev. and Mrs. Ito with other missionaries and members celebrate God's Day 1984 in Burkina Faso