

## **Friederike Buczyk née Schubert - An Unyielding Spirit - A Determined Journey Across Borders**

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### **Beyond Borders**

In the burning heat of the day and carrying a heavy backpack, I dragged myself from the border checkpoint in Nepal to the border checkpoint in India.

The Indian border guard flipped through the blank pages of my passport several times. "Go back to Nepal!" I tried to ask and explain but faced only silent rejection. I trudged the fifty yards back to the Nepali border checkpoint, but then he handed me my passport saying: "You cannot go back to Nepal!" An awful sense of abandonment flooded me. Inwardly trembling and shocked, I dragged myself back to the border checkpoint on the Indian side.

'Now what? Where am I? Where do I go?' The same border guard looked at me sternly, and everyone in the hut ignored me. I looked around, fell onto a rickety chair, and closed my eyes. 'Why am I here, abandoned, between two countries? Far from civilization as I knew it.

Far away from anyone who speaks my language.' In this endless moment, oppressed by the heat and humidity in this simple hut.

'God did not create national borders. Why are there different countries? Who created borders? How do I ever get out of this predicament? In God's eyes, all of us are His children, and humankind is one family.' There I sat. Tears rolled down my cheeks involuntarily. I cannot remember for how long.

It was getting late in the day. Suddenly the border guard ripped my passport out of my hand and slammed a stamp into it. "One week!" Dazed, I stumbled out of the hut. I hoped one week would be sufficient to cross the Indian continent from North to South, by bus and train, and reach my mission country Sri Lanka by ferry. How did I end up in this situation?

### **God's Calling**

The call to spread the Divine Principle throughout the world made sense. Jesus had twelve apostles to spread his message, and True Father needed a foundation in 120 countries. Nobody had to persuade me. I had studied the teaching intensively for over a year and enthusiastically shared it with others. I was convinced that we stood at a historic turning point, and this needed to be shared with humanity to have a chance for peace. However, I felt like a mere spectator among the members gathered at our training center in Camberg. I was just eighteen years old, still in high school. That night, lying in my sleeping bag and reflecting on this unusual day, I was overwhelmed by a sudden strong sense, 'You're going!' The gathering continued the next day. Reverend Paul Werner asked for volunteers and called one country after the other: "Sri Lanka!" My hand flew up automatically, Asia spoke to me. I could not imagine myself in Africa or South America.

During those two days at the end of winter 1975, we were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Nothing could stop God's calling in my heart. I am the eldest in my family and have three younger brothers. My parents loved the mountains, and we spent Sundays and holidays in nature, hiking and skiing. I found the presence of God in nature. Yet, I had one big question: 'God, what are You doing in

this chaotic world? If I do not understand this, my faith in You has no meaning.

God, what is Your plan for humanity today?' The Divine Principle answered my questions profoundly. God is alive. It is not about belief in God, church or religion, but the reality of God. God is just as real as you and me. He has a plan and a dream for us. True Parents connected me to the living God, especially during my 21 years as a foreign missionary. That journey began in 1975. My parents and my youngest brother brought me to the airport in Frankfurt on 27th April 1975 to depart for Sri Lanka, my assigned mission.

Thirty years later, my mother wrote me a long, sincere letter explaining her tears that day. She had feared never to see me again.

How must God and True Parents have felt sending us, young missionaries into the world? We were full of fire. I packed my suitcase with exactly 20 kg, including a copy of the Divine Principle and the Bible, both in German. I had no idea what to expect at my destination, yet I had trust, faith and was in constant silent dialogue with God.



### **First Impression**

The plane circled above the island of Sri Lanka. I was astonished by so many bald treetops, thinking, 'What's wrong with those trees?' Well, coconut palms look like this from above! Next, I was shocked by the many locals with bright red tongues at the airport of Colombo, the capital city. I had heard about different skin colors, but different tongue colors? I spent the first night in a guest house. The sparsely furnished room appeared to me like a cell. I could barely sleep for fear that the huge propeller of the ceiling fan would fall onto the bed. For a long time, I stared at a three-inch-long cockroach that sat on the edge of the washbasin before I killed it and dared to go to the toilet. I had never imagined becoming a missionary or living abroad. I loved my hometown Nuremberg with its 1000-year history. In Sri Lanka, people often asked where I came from. "From Nuremberg!" "Ah, that's where they held the Nazi trials!" This immediate reaction shocked me. I was proud of my hometown for many good reasons. But this response made me realize we all bear the burden of our nation's history, lineage, and origins. My American sister had brought many of Father Moon's speeches given to the missionaries in America.

What struck me most was True Father's emphasis on serving and loving our mission country's people instead of just focusing on our own organization. His clear and selfless guidance deeply moved me.

### **Beginning the Mission**

On my first afternoon in Colombo, I met Mrs. Floris, a petite, elderly lady dressed in black.

She approached me as I was walking down the main street in Colombo, obviously looking for something. "You are a missionary! You are so young! You are all alone?... You absolutely have to meet Pastor Colton." Although I lacked good command of the English language, she introduced me to Pastor Colton and his wife, Sister Susan. Together, they led a dynamic, fast-growing and Holy Spirit-filled Pentecostal church – so different from the Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran traditions I knew growing up. Unfortunately, I could not convey the depth of the Divine Principle to Pastor Colton and Sister Susan. My first bus trips through downtown Colombo on the way to the German Embassy were shocking. I had never encountered such poverty: young mothers in rags, carrying babies on their hips, skinny little children next to them, barefoot, young fathers carrying their few belongings in old rice sacks over their shoulders. They searched the rubbish bins for anything edible. I could not stop my tears for the first two weeks.

My American sister Merlinda, was due to arrive in a few weeks. I left my address at the German Embassy. There I met a young German lady who became our first member in Sri Lanka. She was wearing a plain white sari and her head nearly bald the day I met her. For many months she had been training with

a yoga group in India. Now she was waiting for documents to enter Vietnam as a yoga teacher.

Her yogi name was Amala. God and True Parents found a true missionary in her. I listened to her story. My heart and mind raced excitedly. 'She definitely needs to study the Divine Principle and hear about True Parents,' was my only thought from then on. Then Amala found herself at a crossroads. 'The Divine Principle is so clear and convincing. But inside, I am torn as to whether I should follow Baba (founder of their yoga organization) or the True Parents. I will fast until I have an answer,' she determined. It was the hottest season of the year. After a few days, Merlinda suggested that she meditate in the coolness of a church. Hours later, Amala returned, beaming and excited. "When I emerged from deep meditation in the church, a wedding was going on. Then everything became obvious to me. Humanity needs True Parents; the way of salvation is through the marriage blessing and family." Since that very day, she has been fully involved in the mission. Our Japanese brother arrived in time for the first workshop.

Merlinda presented the lectures, Michinori and I cooked lunch. Most of our guests – Buddhists and Hindus – were enthusiastic about the idea of a world family of peace, with God as the origin of humanity. They embraced us as part of their families. One point impressed them: "Although you believe in Jesus, you do not condemn our religion like some others." One of the Buddhist families sent their eldest daughter to stay with us for a week to care for us when Merlinda and I were seriously ill. These experiences exemplified Jesus' words as written in Matthew 10:42 'And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'

### **Galle Face Green**

Galle Face Green is a park along the Indian Ocean in the heart of Colombo. One day, I was sitting in the park, on a grassy hill, and let my gaze wander far across the sea to the west, towards home. I prayed and sang songs. When the thought of returning to Germany crossed my mind, I could not stop my tears from flowing. God had witnessed the suffering and injustice the people in this country endured throughout their long history, especially during the many years of colonization. He also understood my hesitation and helplessness.

'Stay here!'... 'Yes, I'll stay!' Father Moon often spoke about the Heart of God: as the Parent of humankind, God suffered most throughout the tragic history of humanity. These did not just remain words but profound experiences during prayer and the driving force which kept me going. Furthermore, Jesus' words in Matthew 7:7 were essential on my path to find God's guidance: 'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.'

### **Political Background**

Forty years ago, the nations and peoples in our world were isolated from each other.

News about distant lands was rare for ordinary citizens. As I prepared for my mission, I found a few books about Ceylon which became independent from British rule in 1948. In 1972 this beautiful island nation was renamed Sri Lanka, closer to its original name, to strengthen the national spirit. For years, Sri Lankan students had been offered affordable education at Lumumba University in Moscow. As a result, Communist and anti-imperialist ideologies spread, particularly among young people.



### **Deportation and Conflict**

After six months, our initial visas expired.

Merlinda and I had difficulties staying in the country. Our Japanese brother was able to stay in Sri Lanka as a businessman. Being Asian might have helped. We tried everything possible, eventually, we had to leave for India. When trying to re-enter Sri Lanka, we were escorted on the spot back to the plane on

which we had just arrived. It slowly dawned on us that we faced deportation. There we sat, shocked, with tears streaming uncontrollably as the plane lifted off. Unexpectedly, the flight attendant asked me to accompany her into the cockpit.

"What's going on" the Indian pilot asked me in perfect German. I told him all about our mission. He was impressed and promised to help us. We were the only passengers who climbed back up the gangway into that propeller-driven plane. We flew into the night in a darkened plane and landed in Madras, today's Chennai. The pilot assured us and promised to bring our passports and luggage on his next weekly flight from Colombo. Then he arranged a taxi and sent us to a Catholic girls' college with a personal letter to the Mother Superior. The Catholic college cared for us without questioning, and our suitcases and passports were returned to us a week later. Unfortunately, our passports were marked with bold red deportation stamps. It was impossible to return to Sri Lanka. While recovering, I found a book about Saint Patrick in the library. It described his tenacity in following God's calling, returning to his mission despite rejections.

His life story gave me new courage. For nearly two years, I crossed the border into Sri Lanka at alternating locations and could stay for 30 days each time. Later, Merlinda lived for a few months in Dharamsala. After many conditions of prayer and fasting, she had an audience with His Excellency the Dalai Lama to create a connection with Father Moon.

Then she returned to America. Our Japanese brother and his family stayed in Sri Lanka and Southern India for many years. Everyone spoke to me in Sinhalese and did not treat me as a foreigner anymore. Then I received a new mission: Fiji!

### **Fiji Islands**

From a report by a Japanese brother initially assigned to a neighboring island, I learned that in 1975, the mission in Fiji passed through a similar course we had experienced in Sri Lanka. I realized that only total trust in God and intense prayer would open a path. I battled doubts and lack of confidence in my heart and mind but decided to set a prayer condition. On the fortieth day, I had newfound friends, a young couple from Germany who worked for the UNDP in Fiji, connected me with the University of the South Pacific in Suva, the capital. The university hired me.

Then a German foundation that supported agricultural development projects in Fiji hired me as a bookkeeper. I had a long-term visa and a stable income. We could afford a Toyota minibus for our Home Church activities. On Sundays, many children were waiting for us to be picked. The Home Church program that developed in London around that time was suitable for the mission in Fiji. The native island population (about 60%) is Melanesian and converted to Christianity with the British colonization in 1874. The other half of the population comes from India, brought to the Fiji sugar cane plantations by the British as indentured laborers. Several Fijian mothers invited me regularly each week to their homes to teach the Divine Principle in depth. We developed trusting relationships with Hindu families through joint activities, praying and singing together for hours during their holiday celebrations. I was not all alone in the mission. An Indian brother who had joined our movement while studying in New Zealand worked for an international company and contributed all his income. He was an excellent Divine Principle teacher. He cared for 360 families in both North and South Samabula. Thanks to the young German couple in Fiji who supported me, I was able to stay in Fiji until the end of 1983. We are in close contact with each other to this day. Thirty years later, a lady from that Home Church area found me in the United States.

### **Nine Years in the Philippines**

In the Spring of 1984, my husband Ron and I were sent to Mindanao, the Philippines' second largest and southernmost island. Our instructions were to increase the number of mission centres and build a training center for the rapidly growing community. It took us five days to drive South with a locally built 'Pinoy Truck.' On our first morning in Davao City, a giant parade with red flags and red T-shirts marched through the main streets to celebrate 1st May. As usual, our student members gathered at the mission center and practiced lecturing the Divine Principle during lunch. Suddenly we heard gunshots in front of the house. Below our mission sign, two policemen lay dead, killed by young communist insurgents. Shocked, my husband asked: "Oh God, should we stay here?" and with his next breath, "Yes. We cannot leave our young brothers and sisters alone." In Mindanao, the mission blossomed.

In Davao, we had the advantage of our Japanese brother's successful pioneering foundation. For the first time, we were able to work officially as missionaries in a country.

Ron and I focused on seminars for teachers and professors. They were excited about the teachings and found hope. The president of the largest university in Davao told us: "This is exactly what we need to counteract the influence of the Communist student organizations!" Another professor was astonished: "For the first time, I have hope that Christians and Muslims can one day live together peacefully on this island." I most vividly remember the 'Godism' rallies in 1986. CAUSA had supplied us with impressive color slides. The key lecture explained how a harmonious society with God at its center can be realized as

an alternative to communism. The participants expressed enthusiasm, and our team was energized. At the same time, more and more leaders of the military, government, schools, and media took part in intensive CAUSA seminars in Manila. In the last town of our campaign, we heard about a radio announcer who broadcasted the CAUSA alternative and 'Godism' every day with great passion. He reached hundreds of thousands of people across Mindanao. Yet, the guerrillas attacked his radio station in broad daylight. He paid with his life. In the wake of this tragedy, we had to stop our rallies. Nevertheless, I believe the CAUSA work that Father and Mother Moon inspired and supported in the Philippines saved the country from turning communist during those years. Ron and I barely knew each other when we began our mission in Mindanao. Working together helped us to understand and appreciate one another. Ron was practical and resourceful.

He organized everything well and built a financial foundation for the mission's growth.

Father and Mother Moon gave the best husband to me! Eventually, enough money was raised to buy a rice farm for the future training center; the purchase included a water buffalo called Harmony. We produced brown rice and were amazed at the positive effects on everyone's health, including my own, during my pregnancy. The warm and non-judgmental hearts of the Philippine people helped me experience God's embracing love much deeper. My parents visited us in the Philippines in 1986. They were profoundly impressed by the members, students and professors who worked with us.

Afterwards, they always defended our movement. Ron's parents visited as well, although 70 years of age, they embarked on the long journey from California to Davao to embrace their first granddaughter. We lived on the 'Rice Farm' after our daughter, Biyeun, was born. During that time, Ron and several brothers finally built the training center. This experience bonded all brothers and sisters.

The 21-day Divine Principle workshops I taught there are unforgettable to me. In addition, the training center served as a training facility for Won Hwa Do martial arts. We are incredibly grateful for these experiences, and remember those days as the most challenging and the most wonderful time in our life. With our Philippine brothers and sisters' close cooperation, unity, tireless dedication, and ingenuity, the businesses helped the mission to be self-sufficient.

### **Khabarovsk – Far East Russia**

Early 1993 we started our mission in Khabarovsk, Russia, east of Siberia, and 500 miles north of North Korea. We had moved from the tropics to the Arctic! In Russia, after the Soviet Union's fall, life was changing for everyone. For the first six months, we moderated ongoing Divine Principle seminars for teachers and students in Vladivostok. With the support of teachers and students, we introduced a new curriculum in all high schools. Communist ideology was outdated, and this curriculum was in great demand. "My World and I" was developed by educators from Russia and America. It focussed on character education based on Russian literature and world religions. We learned enough Russian to cope with everyday life. Our daughter spent the whole day in a Russian kindergarten and mastered the language better than anybody else in our family. I was deeply impressed by the teachers' attitudes towards life. Despite countless difficulties, they did not complain but found solutions and stuck together, helping each other. Sometimes they were not paid for a few months and depended on supplies they had carefully saved. Several teachers brought us part of their harvest each autumn: fresh and preserved vegetables and plenty of berry preserves to provide us with vitamins for the long winter ahead. Two couples from Khabarovsk participated in the worldwide Marriage Blessing in August 1995, transmitted via satellite. Many people in Khabarovsk seemed to originate from the Ukraine, probably exiled after the 1917 revolution. My husband's grandfather had escaped Ukraine to Canada before World War I. The lifestyle and apartments in Khabarovsk reminded me of my grandparents and great-aunts, who migrated from former Czechoslovakia to Germany after World War II. We felt an invisible bond with the people there.

### **The True Parents of Humankind**

In retrospect, before I crossed the border from Nepal to India, several missionaries had met for a short retreat in the Himalayan foothills. Visa problems in neighboring countries had brought us all to Nepal. In the evening we sat together. One by one, we shared our testimony of how we had found True Parents. That night I lay awake, flooded with tears and gratitude, feeling God's embrace. I reflected on how each one of us was guided by God: a young man and a young woman from distant, unknown Korea had done all they could to realize God's original will for humanity. They challenged us and helped us overcome the boundaries of different languages, customs, living conditions in foreign cultures, and the barriers within. As morning dawned, I snuck out alone. The peaks of the Himalayas appeared twice as high in the clear morning air, and I felt reborn. They led us with their deep heart and clear vision. They dedicated their entire lives to God's will, despite being persecuted, unjustly accused, and vilified, especially in America, Europe, Korea, and Japan. Nevertheless, I experienced first-hand how their teaching and example inspired people from diverse countries and backgrounds in a life-changing way. Father and Mother Moon indeed are the True Parents of all and I am forever grateful to them.