

*Part Six*

Forty Days and Forty Nights

## *Forty days all alone?*

One morning, during our Morning Service in the mobile home, Else gave us a piece of news which scared the living daylights out of us: the entirety of the German Unification Church members were supposed to do forty days' pioneering... How was that again? Forty days...alone? All by my lonesome? With no one? In a strange city? You've got to be kidding!

And what, might I ask, am I supposed to be doing for forty days? The "new mission" developed itself over a certain period of time, in which we got speeches and other kinds of preparational material—and yes, we did the Seven-Day Fast as well. A couple of weeks down the road the idea didn't sound either crazy or unfamiliar; in fact, there was a certain expectation to go out into one's own city.

Since we were the fundraising team of Stuttgart, our cities were located around Stuttgart. My city was Nürtingen—a beautiful small town in Swabia. One Sunday afternoon the time had arrived. In the morning we had a Sunday Service all together in Camberg; we took one official photo of all the pioneers going out—and there I am, first row and center, all "eager beaver". Scared? It doesn't look that way, at least not in the photo. Different vans went into different directions of Germany, and dropped off Unification Church members—one in a small town each. By the time I arrived, it was late afternoon on Sunday.

There I was—a stranger in a strange city—with my bag and my sleeping bag. A true Moonie didn't need any more than that in life. We were supposed to find 360 homes and establish our Home Church area there. We were following a pattern set up by Rev. Moon in England throughout the years of 1978 and beyond, until about the middle of 1981. This was the summer of 1980, we all knew the stories of countless Korean elder brothers and sisters going out pioneering in little villages all over Korea to testify and help the people there. Now it was our turn.

I have to admit it—I felt very lonely on that first Sunday afternoon. It was cool, cloudy and a couple of drops of rain fell as well. We said: "I belong to a group of missionaries who want to help in the neighborhood"—the "Neighborhood Help" we called it. In Germany there really are organizations for neighborhood help, and in Nürtingen an organization like that existed as well, as I found out later. I had faith in the Living God, my fears were all subdued. One nice lady invited me in, and gave me a piece of typical German Sunday cake; but no, she didn't need any help. At one point I had to leave and I felt very sad. It became evening. I rang the bell of a nice house and a nice elderly lady opened the door. Somehow she understood the idea—the whole idea. That is, she understood that I didn't have a place to stay the night. So she invited me in and said I could stay overnight on a sofa bed and I felt so grateful.

She was a widow; her husband had only very recently passed away, and I had the distinct feeling that if her husband were still alive, I wouldn't have been able to stay in that house. She had a real estate business and I stayed there for many days. She was a very nice lady. She went by the name of Strohhaecker and had quite an elevated way of life. The idea was to help the people in and around their homes and to witness to them at the same time. Mrs. Strohhaecker didn't require a lot of helping, since her house had everything—even a dishwasher. With so much technological perfection, what was there left for me to do? Since her husband had only recently passed away, she talked to me for a long time about his illness and finally, his death. Being in Nürtingen was the first time I heard at first hand about the lives of the relatives of sick people, the world of medicine, doctors, hospitals—I simply did not know that such a world existed. Well, in my world, it didn't exist. I never got sick. I never had to go to see a doctor. Medicine...what for?

Living and sleeping at her house, I went out to visit the neighborhood, my neighborhood, and bit by bit I got to know the people, their houses, their homes, their families, their lives. The people who really required helping were mostly widows, the elderly, who were somewhat poor and quite forgotten by everyone else. I cleaned the home of one widow. While I was

doing that, someone called me at her home and asked me to come to her house to help her clean, because she was alone and had so much to do. Needless to say, she was a widow as well, and lived in another part of town, somewhat further away from my area of homes. I went anyway. That house was truly a mess. I couldn't believe it. The kitchen was a disgrace. Apart from that, she had some animals all over the place—a cat, a dog and some birds—and somehow the animals had won the upper hand over the house.

First things first: the kitchen was cleaned from top to bottom until it sparkled. With me around, that big fat cat had lost all of its courage to settle again in the middle of the kitchen table: no sir, no more cat on the table! After hours and hours of hard work, Mrs. Walker, the owner of the private zoo, got herself all inspired and helped me clean, and there was a nice fresh smell in the kitchen. She had an almost grown daughter, who had a job and didn't really live with her anymore, and a fully grown son, who was out of the house as well, since it was vacation time. The children left the cat and dog to take care of their mother—they had better, more important things to do.

Mrs. Walker was part of a completely unknown (to me) religious group, "The Society of People Loving Humanity", and I was *her* witnessing project. She took me to the Sunday Service of this congregation and publicly gave testimony about me, of how "Jesus had sent me over to her house to help her". It was nice, to be someone's "spiritual child". She shared with me her inspirational book of the founder of that religion—don't ask me, because I have completely forgotten the name of the book, the name of the founder, everything. What I do remember is her having another book by the melodic name of *Morning' Dew*, with very pretty Jugendstil illustrations, right out of the Twenties. Short paragraphs of that book were to be read every morning, to start well with the day. What a good idea, really. Sometimes she would read to me some paragraphs of it and naturally I would talk about our Church, about Rev. Moon, about the whole "Neighborhood Help" project and how the actual name of it was "Home Church", with the underlying idea that every home should turn into a living church that nourishes the family and everyone around and in contact with it.

What a sweet old lady she was! I stayed in her house for the second half of my forty days' pioneering period and I felt so much at home and settled in that it was hard for me to think about going back to Camberg.

## *The Son of Man has no place to rest His Head...*

There's no way one doesn't think of Jesus. One relates one's whole experience to Jesus. I was thinking of Jesus all of the time. How Jesus sent out his disciples—they went out two by two, we had to go alone. We were supposed to visit the churches in our area as well, all the churches. The Protestant pastor in my city made my life quite impossible; he wanted to get rid of me and tried to run me out of town at all cost. He contacted Mrs. Strohhaecker, the widow I was living with, and I had to leave her house. I was his "competition"—at least, that's the way he felt about me. I was disturbing the peace and he had to get rid of me...

We had an information kit put together by the public relations department of the German Unification Church, and it looked very nice. How I had the guts to speak to the Catholic priest of the whole town of Nürtingen, I don't remember. Fact is, at one point I was sitting in his office in his Church and he looked at me with a lot of understanding and benevolence. I had left the information kit with his secretary for a couple of days before that meeting, and when he invited me to sit down, he had already looked it over. For all of the established Churches, we were the "Moon Sect", a "Youth Religion", designed to entice and seduce gullible young people into being "brainwashed zombies", following the every whim of their Master or Masters, and left with no money, no job, no social security and no real future, as well.

Considering all of that, this Catholic priest treated me very well. He told me something that I would never forget for the rest of my life. He said that I was still "all wrapped up in the fire of first love". I had never heard that expression before, and I had only a vague understanding of what it might mean. I had never looked at life that way. When I left his office, he gave me an iron crucifix, very different from anything I had seen before. There

was no dying Jesus hanging from it. It was a square cross and in a circle, the twelve apostles were engraved on it—"Jesus and his twelve, the symbol of the Christian community," the priest explained to me. I treasured that crucifix. Later when I had my own room in the United States. I put it right up over my bed and looked at it every day. I must still have it somewhere. That priest was truly a Man of God.

## *Sleeping Outside*

One night, I really didn't have a place to stay. Because of the interference of the Protestant pastor in the neighborhood, I didn't have a place to go to. There was a park up on a hill, which was an orchard with a lot of fruit trees. One could see the whole town from one angle and I had my area at the left—it was the ideal place to pray for the city. I had already spotted a suitable apple tree...just in case. Unfortunately that day had arrived. At night-time I went up the hill and set up house under the apple tree. What was I supposed to do? I had no place to spend the night. I really had no experience sleeping outside. It was a nice night, a starry night, warm and—thank God—it didn't rain! I spent a long, long time preparing my sleeping bag and then I changed into my pyjamas. I'm sure I was one of the few people worldwide who would change into pyjamas to sleep on the ground under an apple tree. Have you ever seen a cat looking for the perfect place to sleep and turning and turning on the spot, until it has finally settled down and settled in to have that nap? Well, that was me at that time. I tried not to think. I just thought about my other sisters in the neighboring cities and hoped that they were doing well. Thank God, nobody saw me. Very early in the morning, I changed from the pyjamas into my clothes, left the sleeping bag in a hidden place where nobody would find or notice it, and tried to find a place to work and to stay.

On two more occasions I had to sleep outside—but this time I really wanted to sleep outside, as a "condition" for my town. I had found a nice place in an Elementary School, and since it was summertime—vacation time—the complex was quite empty. There I settled down on a bench outside the building. This time I didn't go through all the hassle of taking my clothes off and putting my pyjamas on...somehow it finally hit me that people who sleep outside don't sleep in pyjamas. But yes, I still needed a good time to prepare the sleeping bag and everything else. Thank



God, it was summer. To do this whole procedure—with or without pyjamas—in a colder period of the year would have been devastating.

In my town of Nürtingen I had found a "spiritual child", a young girl in her twenties. Let's call her Angela; she was a student, but since it was vacation time, we spent lots of time together. She told me that she had been quite sick before, almost to the point of dying, but that her faith in God and in herself had cured her. She was the real fruit of all of my efforts over many years.

I had brought Angela with me and she was in the seven-day workshop. But unfortunately the workshop participants and us regular members were kept quite separate, so that I hardly saw her. She was a survivor. Apart from that, she really was a very pretty girl. We would see each other very late at night, after her lectures and our activities had finished, and she would tell me about her understanding of what the lectures meant in her life. At one point, we had to leave with the team, Angela stayed on in Camberg, and when the seven-day workshop was finished, she would go back to Nürtingen. There, she settled back into her normal life and the whole thing was nothing more than a nice one-week vacation in the countryside. But we would write to each other—for years we would write to each other. So at least I knew, that she was alright. Later she had a boyfriend with whom she stayed together for many years. I met him once and I liked him. He was a student and after he had finished his studies—something about farming and agriculture—he wanted to work in the German Development Service in a Third World country. Someone with such an altruistic mind can't be a bad person. He never went out into the jungle and—who knows—maybe they are married now and have a couple of kids.

To be honest, at this stage in life, I don't think I would let my daughter go out for forty days alone by herself, the way I did. We just had this incredible faith that nothing bad was going to happen to us—and nothing bad did happen. After the forty days, we all met again in Camberg—everyone with a totally different story to tell. Everyone was alright. Except for one sister, who was even a fundraising team-leader—she came back, stayed one day with us,

then packed her things to leave for her pioneer city, because she had found "true love" there. All of us were in good health and good spirits. There were a lot of testimonies; in fact our gathering after the forty days was us sharing our stories with everyone else. I remember one very shy sister—the first door where she rang the bell, that's where she stayed the whole of the forty days. I remember part of Hubert's story: at the end of his forty days, he organized a big neighborhood party and went fundraising in the stores—for prizes. Somehow he got every shop owner to donate some merchandise, which were handed out as prizes for the winners of the different activities he organized.

It was a great experience—a unique experience. That was the summer of 1980. All of us, having been part of this experience, had found very deep convictions about our survival abilities—both physically and spiritually.

While in Niirtingen I sang one song a whole lot, one of our Holy Songs, but not in its normal, traditional Christian hymn-style version, but in a spiced-up version made popular by Sunburst, our very own American pop group of the '70s and '80s. I loved their music. Liter in life, I would first meet one Sunburst singer and then the other.

### *He has called me*

The Lord has called and I will go,  
Where He leads me I will follow;  
The same in sorrow as in joy,  
With one heart I follow my Lord.  
For none on earth can turn me back,  
Not even death can stop me.  
No none on earth can turn me back,  
Not even death can stop me.

To barren valleys piled with bones,  
I will take the living message;  
To Sodom's foul and wretched streets,  
I will bear the word with love.  
I bind my heart, my life to Yours,  
That it may be an offering;  
I bind my heart, my life to Yours,  
That it may be an off ring.

To You belongs our full acclaim,  
All glory pow'r and honor;  
The world's contempt I do not fear,  
I will gladly bear the cross.  
Without esteem, without reknown,  
I only wish to follow;  
Without esteem, without reknown  
I only wish to follow.