

I was asked so many times, to write about my life, so I will make an effort to do so, hoping that someone may benefit from it.

I was born 1952, April 30th, 7 o'clock in the morning, in my paternal Grandparents home in Karken, a Village 50 km north of Aachen, on the border to Holland.

My Father did not want to begin building his own house, without being sure, there would be children.

My Mother's home was just a few streets away.

Even my Parents were almost neighbors, they are of different background, Mother's Father's name is French, Father's family could have some roots in Holland. In any case, their dialect was slightly different.

We never spoke German at home, only dialect. Only in school we learned German.

I was the first grandchild on the maternal side, the third on my Father's side.

It was exactly 7 years after the end of WW II. It was a time of hope, but still there were signs of the past, like many men lost an arm or a leg.

There was talking about bombings, prisoners of war and uncles that had not survived. Always when airplanes flew over our house or sirens went off my heart was pounding.



My Life, My Testimony - Franziska Maria [Scherrers] Stephan - December 2016



One by one our family grew, till 1960 I had 4 brothers and one sister.

My parents were happy about every new child, but for my mother it must have been so hard. On top of all after a few years of marriage, my Father collapsed from an unknown nerve sickness, after he had worked hard to pay off the debt on the house.

Also, since an accident at 14 years of age he gradually lost his eyesight and became blind. I heard people say "That poor child, so many children in the family and a sick and blind Father" but for me it was normal.

My Parents and grandparents where all faithful people, God was all, they could hold onto.

My father's family was very poor, my mother's family had many tragic situations. My mother had to care for 6 younger brothers and sisters since she was 14 years old, because her mother got sick with cancer and after 3 years died. She was herself still a child in need of a mother. (Later, in Cheong Pyong, my Mother's mother spoke to me and apologized, that she could not give love to my mother.)

She perceived her Father to be difficult, maybe because he had no wife anymore. My Grandmother had asked him to marry again, but he never did. Besides, he had to work on the fields and he made wooden shoes like they wear in Holland. (Especially for children my aunt would paint them blue or red and draw beautiful little flowers or birds on them).

My mother always felt overburdened and she did not want to get married. Once, she had escaped from home into a monastery, where she wanted to work in the kitchen, but grandfather brought her back home, because he could not do without her.

Only when her in the war wounded younger brother Christian begged her on his deathbed, to marry his friend, she had to promise him, so she married my father. My father could never enter the war, because of his bad eyesight. Also as Catholics, both parents' families opposed Hitler.

My Mother's younger sister got married before her. Grandfather waited so much for a little Paul to come (that was his name) but my aunt's baby son died, before he was born. But when I arrived, I was Grandfather's one and everything.

I remember him climbing up a ladder to the attic to get some apples and baking them for me, even he was already a sick man.

Sometimes he would buy me coconuts from a horse drawn cart, because I liked them. At the age of 4 years, I became very sick with diphtheria. Many children died from it and also for me was not much hope. When my grandfather found out, was the first time he ever was seen crying. Not long after I recovered, Grandfather died, almost like he exchanged life with me. He died on cancer in his throat. (Diphtheria also manifests in throat).

After this, I seemed to have been a sickly child, very pale and skinny. When it was time for me to enter school, my parents were asked to keep me one more year at home. Also the government send me 6 weeks into the mountains for recuperation, which I enjoyed.

I must have been ca. 5 or 6 years old, when something strange happened. We just had finished building our own home. My Parents had been taking loans and now my father worked very hard, to pay them off.

At that time we had 3 or 4 children and my father thought, to rent out the upper floor with bathroom and attic would be a good way to have some extra income. One of his co-workers was expecting a baby and they had nowhere to go, so my father offered the apartment for 25 Mark. They were from Holland. I think my mother was never too happy about the deal.

She must have felt something. Anyway, soon after the baby was born, my 5 year old cousin lost his life, crossing the street to look at the baby. Not long after, we were all outside, my mother run out of the house, borrowed a coat from my aunt to go to the police. Something must have happened, because we children were not allowed back into the house.

The same day, a farm vehicle brought our mattresses to my other aunts house, where we would stay for a while in a very small, damp room. My father brought me to sleep to my grandmother's house, because my health was not strong.

We must have lived like that for a while, because my Parents did not receive the permission to throw them out, till they would find another place for them, even they never paid rent and even burnt all my grandfather's book and wooden shoes.

Once they even set a fire in one room. Later, I heard, the man killed himself.

Finally at the age of almost 7, I was allowed into school. Our village school was a catholic school. Over one of the buildings entrance door was a sign "Güte, Zucht und Weisheit lehre mich o Herr" which means something like "Goodness of heart, Discipline and wisdom teach me o God."

My teachers in the early years carried this kind of spirit. My 1st and 2nd grade teacher was a deeply religious woman. She never married, her students where her life. Already she raised up my parents' generation. She was said, together with our Pastor, a sincere and intelligent man, to have been the reason for our village prosperity. Of course, then I could not appreciate any of this. But naturally I respected my teachers.

It was in the blood. My early teachers cared for us like our parents would I remember my 3rd grade teacher opening his purse and paying my school milk, if I didn't order. In reality, I didn't like milk so much.

Of course, I enjoyed school very much, did my homework neatly and became one of the best students, mainly because I was good at German language spelling and grammar. Many thought, I was so smart, but in reality, if I had a good relationship with the teacher, it was, like I could draw answers out of her head, or I could ask myself and I would receive an answer.

This I could sometimes do till the age of about 12. One time I didn't raise my hand after a teacher's question, but I got picked anyway and the answer came to me. "Why didn't you raise your hand?" "I did not know the answer" I said.

In my 2nd or 3rd year of school my father had me write down a quite difficult sentence, which he had tried on all our relatives, but I was the only one writing it correctly. That made him very proud of me.

So on one side, concerning school, I received praise, which gave me a certain confidence, even to the point of feeling to be better than others.

Once, my grandmother scolded me: "God is going to punish you for your pride and arrogance." She said it in dialect with slightly different words, then I did not know, what they meant. But there was another side to my life. When I was 7 years old, once my mother was not feeling well, so while she was taking a nap, I washed all the dishes to surprise her. Indeed, she was surprised and told me: Ok, from now on, this is your job, just wash them with hot water! One has to understand, these were a lot of dishes including burned pots. Very soon I had to clean the whole kitchen, after 1 or two years the whole lower floor and soon the whole house.

Mother was indeed overburdened with many things, she had to help my father with his work, he at that time made baskets out of willows. She had to do the final cleaning, she had to take care of a big garden, small animals and then every year another child.

When I was 12 years of age, a small happening should change the flow of my life. I overheard my mother talking to someone "Yes, and Franziska isn't of any help to me". This hurt me and upset me very much. "Ok, you are right, I am not of any help to you, from today on!" and stubbornly I refused to do any job. Fortunately my sister was now old enough to take over. Always I would have liked to go to a higher school, but my mother thought, I would not be strong enough, also I was a girl and didn't need that. "Just learn to cook and sew on buttons your sister can become an animal doctor and you do her household, so you can rest, if you are tired. Just obey, and you will have a nice and easy life!

"I don't want an easy life", I replied. My mother pitied me, because I was not strong. Sometime she said "In the olden days, there was natural selection, the weak would die, and it was better so" or something to that account.

I had no real friends. I felt distant to my schoolmates, even I had a girlfriend, but we had totally different interests. I didn't like to play like other children, but I loved to read and to go out in nature, best alone. Only from nature could I feel comfort. I cried a lot those days, I didn't know why. Sometimes our cat licked my tears, like she understood me. I felt soon, that something was wrong with people even my own parents. Once, I overheard my mother lying to my father (It was relatively insignificant, she wanted to protect my brother), but I felt, I could not accept her as my mother, that rather I would be her mother, so I was very lonely.

Finally, I was 13 years old, my Parents decided to take me out of school, 7th grade (which was actually illegal) and registered me into a monastery kitchen (home for aged nuns) which actually my mother would have loved to do herself in her youth.

They thought, it was time for me to leave the house, because I became too difficult to bear.

When our family doctor heard of this plan, he strongly discouraged my Parents from putting me into this dark and depressing old people's home. So when one day, we were sitting on our knees praying rosary, a well-known business owner (formerly Hitler youth leader) knocked on our door and asked to have me as an apprentice for his small supermarket, my Parents agreed. Honestly, I did not feel ready to go to work, business never interested me, but I had no choice.

So it happened, that I should stay 3 more years with my Parents.

So, I would begin work at 8 in the morning till 7 pm, with 1 ½ hour to go home and eat lunch. Wednesday morning I went to business school, afternoon I worked again, Saturday was work till 3 pm.

For a child like me it was hard, there was no sitting down during work time. Mainly I had to stock products, clean the store and sometimes the private house, help with kitchen and laundry and take care of customers. I kind of hiding from customers wherever I could. I felt more comfortable doing cleaning or kitchen work. Especially my cleaning methods must have upset my boss often. When I cleaned, it had to be clean, a cleanly mess, which nobody understood. I would lay on my belly to go under shelves and freezers, possible with needle, to get all the hidden corners clean. I used so much water and detergent, that the water would run down the steps and puddle in the street.

Customers stepped over puddles and me, trying not to slip. That was every Saturday morning at least 2 hours. (I cleaned like that also at home before, later I heard, they had to replace all the rotten wooden floor under the linoleum). Furniture got similar treatment. One day I scrubbed the white bathroom door, instead of getting cleaner, it started to show wood color. But she never scolded me for that.

Only one day, she couldn't hold it in any more, she took out bucket and scrubber and showed me, how to clean the floor (with almost no water) in 10 min. I don't think, I ever took her advice.

I must have worked very slowly at that time too. There were many challenges, but over time I grew stronger. Even I wasn't doing well in business school, I just was not interested, eventually I passed my exams.

I want to tell about one incident that happened during that time.

During vacation time, at the age of 15, most of my boss's family went to Italy. I was left alone with one of their daughters to take care of house and business. Since I lived with her for this time, she took me out for movies and one day out for a swim in the nearby lake.

When we arrived, we found all people congregating at the opposite shore. We heard, they were searching for a black man that had just drowned an hour ago. Jokingly I called to her: "Don't step on him" She ran after me, I run away from her and suddenly found myself in deep water. I could not swim. There was nobody near us, so I realized "I am going to die now". I remember, how my mother had thought us, in a life threatening situation, to repent and make a promise to God, that if He saves me, to enter a convent as a nun.

I said to God: "Ok, I will do my best, but I am not become a nun".

That moment, someone carried me out on his arms. (Where he came from I don't know). I think, I was half unconscious. If I had made that promise, maybe I could never have been happy again, because I would have had to keep it.

Finally my apprentice ship finished and never again I wanted to involved in anything connected to business, but when my Parents registered me again at an institution of the catholic church, this time in Aachen, 50 km away (I would be in the care of nuns) evoked this many attacks of rebellion, not because the place wasn't good, only because I hadn't been asked.

The nuns liked me, because I was an honest and conscientious girl, I always did my best. Some seemed to have hope, that someday I would become a good nun. I had to show to them that I was not planning to become a saint and never ever a nun.

So I did not keep the dress code (no sleeve less shirt, no tight skirts, never without socks.) A mother Mary picture in our dining room I would everyday replace with some impressionists art picture, Gauguin, Degas, Monet and others. They never said a word. I must admire and be grateful for their patience.

At this time, about age 18, I came for the first time in contact with missionaries of the Unification Church. I was in an especially rebellious mood. She asked me "Are you satisfied with your life?" "Pa, of course", was my answer and I was proud, to have gotten rid of her so easily. But one impression struck me. Those people where different. I felt a sincerity and something like purity I missed in other young people around me.

I had been working in kitchen and dining room some more than 2 years now. It had been a good time for me altogether forgetting about my emotional ups and downs.

After this, one of the nuns helped me to register at a school for housekeeping management, so I would be able to advance professionally. Normally this school would not have accepted me because I did not fulfill all the preconditions like a 3 year apprentice time and schooling in housekeeping, but after a 3 month trial I was allowed to stay and finish after one year with a degree in housekeeping management.

Since some time I got a longing to learn ballet dancing. I found out, that there was a school for young adults for evening classes in Köln, a city ca. 100km from my hometown. So I asked the Arbeitsamt (Agency for work) to connect me to a workplace in Köln. Right away I was accepted at a boarding school for girls of the protestant church to work as housekeeping manager.

I had mainly to supervise the kitchen personal make the plans for meals and sometimes cook. I was glad, the kitchen personal knew exactly what to do, because I was not able to instruct people well, even we studied this in school.

Here, I had plenty of free time. If I wasn't reading, I would walk or go by train to nearby (17km away) city of Köln. There is a big shopping zone for pedestrians like in all big cities now. I loved to stroll around here. But more and more all kind of religious groups established their witnessing activities just here. I tried to avoid them, even going other ways, but always again they got me. Most of them I really wasn't interested, but UC members caught my attention, even so I would never have gone alone to one of their meetings. Once I bought a little booklet, once I received a business card, saying one day I would come. I had hoped my brother, who studied medicine in Köln, would go there with me. I was afraid of bible questions, to look stupid, because I did not know much of the bible. My brother could talk better, but he never accompanied me. So that business card stayed in the pocket for a longtime. In the meantime I continued my life working, reading, hoping for prince charming somehow to appear in my life.

I must say, in my workplace, even it belonged to the protestant church, there was no religious warmth, no prayer, no God, no real care like with the nuns. While reading a book "Views of a clown" from Heinrich Böll, questions came to me like: "Am I happy? No"

Are my Parents happy? Not really. So, what my Parents taught me, and I tried to live, was it correct? Maybe not. So thoughts came to me, just to live like almost all other people live, then life would be less complicated and I would not feel so lonely anymore.

The fishing line was thrown out and very soon I would take the bait.

One night, a teacher from a neighboring Institution came to my door and invited me for a glass of wine. "Why not, I thought, take it easy". After a glass of wine he asked me to help him something in his room.

A warning light should have blinked in my mind, but something told me:" It doesn't matter anymore, remember, you are dirty in any case" So I thought "Whatever". My mind was weakened and my body was loosened up by the wine and it happened, what had to happen. This should become the most regrettable incident in my life.

O nooooooooo

Now everything is lost.....

I heard in my mind. It came with such a desperation and disappointment. Suddenly it became clear to me, what was the real cause of human unhappiness and misfortune.

Some smaller voice told me: "get up and start again", but the sun did not shine for me anymore and the birds would not sing for me anymore from then on.

And one other strange phenomena: I felt as one with the people around me, no tension anymore, just take it easy I thought. But after some weeks I felt, I had to warn my brothers and sisters, but also for some of them it was too late, which pained me.

I want to tell about a dream I had at the age of 6 years that stayed vividly in my mind.

My paternal grandmother and I walked by night through a lonely stretch of wasteland at the outskirts of our village, striving toward the moon. Then suddenly out of a field of willows, left of me, came a big, dark snake and took me. Grandmother called me: "come!" I replied "Don't you see that I am dead?" This dream reflects, what would later happen to me. But my body continued to live.....

Cleaning up my pockets, I found the little card with the red sign and threw it away, things had changed.....

Month after month I tried to live on. One day I broke my left foot slipping on an icy walkway. For 6 weeks I was not allowed to work. I spend my time reading a lot. Especially I loved to read books of Pearl S. Buck, who lived in China and America. I learned a lot about Chinese traditions. In the olden days a young man or woman would not find their own spouse, they would be matched.

I thought that this would be a good thing, given, that we are very emotional in our youth and we don't always understand what is good for us. But whom would I trust? My Parents - no I thought, it should be someone close to God, because only God knows me really. Maybe the pope - O no, no, no, I would not trust the pope! So, whom should I trust? There was no one.

Soon summer vacation came, students went home and I was left with lots of free time. I would walk to Köln a lot.

One day I remembered how I wanted to find this ballet school and start evening classes. I wasn't much in a hurry. Strolling along the banks of the Rhine river, eating ice cream, suddenly a beggar stopped me and put a 10 mark bill (10 dollars) into my hand, saying: "It's for you". I was so surprised and I told him "Thank you, but I really don't need it" and gave it back to him. Maybe he was drunk.

This incident kept me occupied, laughing, shaking my head, wondering all the way into the city. Passing along the cathedral a young woman stopped me. I would not have recognized her as a UC member, she was dressed more elegant. When she introduced herself, I turned sideways, so nobody would see me talking to one of them.

I told her, that for some years I had kept that little card in my pocket, but now I would not be interested anymore. "Why?" "Because things have changed" "Don't you have a little time anyway?" "time yes, but I don't feel like it", I thought, but then again, it's vacation and tomorrow is more time to get bored. "Ok" I said, "just for a short while". Reaching her home, there was a young tall man, very skinny and pale, passing through the room a few times. Later I found out, that he was her husband, and much later, that he was on a 7 day fast.

I explained to her, why I was not interested anymore, what happened to me and how I felt to be worthless for God now.

She seemed not to much impressed, and started to explain DP to me. When she came to the fall of when I knew, that she spoke the full truth, but I did not know before, that Lucifer had a sexual relationship with Eve, but it could only have been like that.

My whole life I was wondering about questions like: Why are we people the only beings that don't find into the harmony of nature? Why do we destroy ourselves? Is God playing around with us, are we just marionettes? Why are some people good, others bad, often without their own fault? Why is there no justice?

All she explained to me, I could accept, it made sense.

She explained, that the returned Messiah only can liberate us from the original sin and clean up the fall. I was very excited that there should be hope for me.

"And the Messiah is on earth now" she said. "Ja, Ja, of course", I replied, thinking she means maybe the spiritual Jesus.

"No really, he comes from Korea" "You have a picture?" "Hmm, ok" "Does he have a wife?" and she showed me a picture of True Mother. I felt, a man, that chooses this woman, is a trustworthy man.

That evening I felt like floating on a cloud, and in that night or on one of the following I had a beautiful dream, seeing everything covered with fresh fallen snow.

The following Sunday, 4 in the afternoon, we were supposed to meet again.

In the meantime my excitement had worn off. After all, it was just one of so many new religious groups. When I was looking for the house in Maria-Hilf-Str. I realized, how run-down the neighborhood and the atmosphere was not at all inviting. I rang the bell, hoping no one would open. No one opened. My watch showed 3:50pm and I remembered, I promised to be there at 4:00pm, ok, I would wait. Point 4 I rang again with the same prayer, no luck this time, she opened.

I don't remember, what we talked about, but I remember being concerned, having to give up everything, especially coffee and cake. I was offered one of those terribly healthy drinks like last time, but later, God didn't want to lose me, real good unhealthy cookies. (I realize now, how God so many times went out of His way, for me!)

Next Friday-evening I was being picked up to attend a 2 day seminar at Camberg, to hear again more systematically about Divine Principle. I could accept everything to be true, but I still wondered about the implications on my personal life, how I was to continue. I found it difficult, to sleep with many other girls in one room and also from now on not to look out for a future husband seemed hard for me, even I understood and accepted that this would be a condition to help to indemnify my past mistakes. Also even so I trusted SMM "Master" as we called him then, but would he ever consider me?

Would he ever give me a spouse?

How could I ever like all these UC members, cutting their hair short, wearing quite unfashionable clothes and shoes, going up and down the shopping street witnessing?

What if someone I know, would see me? I felt cold..... but I knew, there is no other way.

I heard, that others had given up their studies and jobs.

I was waiting for advice, what to do next. I should take a 7 day seminar and then another one. I cannot say, that there was ever a day, when I would throw myself with full enthusiasm into it, but I knew, I was to go this way and I had to move far away from home and work, best to another planet, where nobody knows me.

So I quit my work and I was suggested to go and work and live with the Nürnberg center.

I tried to make myself useful in any way I could, cleaning, cooking, and participating in mission work. Very soon after my arrival in Nürnberg everybody started a 3 day fasting as preparation for Fathers speech at Madison Square Garden. Of course, I also participated and finished ok.

I have to tell, what a mixed bunch of people were living together here. There were Koreans, French, one brother from Iran, north Germans and of course Bavarians. Except, that one Korean brother always showed the food was good by loudly burping after meals and that the washing machine was in a way connected to the kitchen sink, so that yesterday's vegetables and rice were turning round and round with the laundry, the living together worked fine.

But altogether I felt a lot of spiritual pressure. I could not sleep well because so many people in the room. Soon it became clear to me, that I had to find a room of my own and a job. Fortunately my center leader also realized this. That way, I was busy and could deal much better. In those 6 weeks living at the center I had gained a lot of weight, eating snacks to relieve the pressure. It was nobody's fault.

It was a place of spiritual war. Truly, where God wants to gain ground, Satan will not retreat without a bitter fight.

Now, that I had my own room, after work I would help in the house and always tried to make conditions like prayer, witnessing or fasting to keep connected. Many times I wished, I had never heard of this movement, because, what I don't know, can't bring me into conflict, but now, knowing the truth, that goes far beyond the understanding of the Christian churches, I could not go back to my old comfortable lifestyle.

I could not betray my conscience. I realized, liberation can only come by passing thru hell. So, I also cut my hair, to make a new beginning and gave up all my bank account and jewelry, not because I had been asked, but because I felt I needed to.

One day, Paul Werner, our country leader, working in America with Father, came to Germany and called for a big meeting of all members in Camberg. I was never told of this by my center leader, but heard it from other members. I was terribly resentful, that I had not been invited. If even new members could attend, why not me? Was I not good enough? I found out, that almost all would be sent to pioneer in foreign mission countries, each together with one Japanese and one American missionary. All came back to the center, to prepare to go out, studying their new languages.

Today, I am so grateful, I had not been sent at that time. For sure, I would have lost my mind. But there would be another chance for me later.

After 8 or 9 months in Nürnberg, I was asked if I would like to move to Regensburg, a center with very few people, where I could have my own room. I agreed joyfully, but I had to suddenly quit my job at the house of an Italian consul, I had tried to witness to, after he had told me, that the Italian communists create a lot of trouble for him. "Oh, don't worry, in 3 years the spook will be over", I told him. That was 1975. (I think, we were very naive then, because we were suggested by some of our leaders, that in 3 years the world would be restored.)

"Oh, really", he said, "how do you know", so I explained to him that the messiah is on earth and gave him a DP book to read. In any case, he thought, I turned a little crazy after suddenly cutting my hair off and quitting.

Coming to Regensburg center was a big relief for me, a quiet, almost romantic house with a wild garden. I think, it had a lot of spirits living in there that sometimes surprised me but seemed to feel comfortable with me, maybe because I took good care of the house.

One time, we were studying DP in the morning, there was a little cabinet in the living room, its lower part was empty, because the door was very hard to open. So this door suddenly opened with a loud noise by itself. One time, after I had gone to rest a little after pledge service I saw a piece of paper and a hand writing in old German (Sütterlin) a name, but nobody had any connection to this name.

One day, when I cleaned the attic, I found leaf-gold and other valuables hiding between the wooden beams and the roof panels, maybe since WW II. I heard later, the house had belonged to a goldsmith. Other unusual things occurred. One time, one of our leaders came to visit, every time, at his arrival, we would offer him a cup of coffee. Unfortunately this time, there was no coffee. Just that day I had asked our center leader for money to buy coffee, cheese, marmalade and something else. "I am sorry, there is no more money", he replied. I asked our guest anyway, if he liked some coffee. To my surprise he answered, "Not now, later" 5 minutes later, the doorbell rang.

Nobody was there, but there was a bag with coffee, cheese, marmalade and something else of the most expensive quality. We would never buy this expensive things. I can only guess, that an old lady had bought those things for us. She was 72 years old, her whole life she had been Jehovah witness and now, at her old age, she came to understand, that Rev. Moon was the Messiah.

She endured a lot of persecution from her JW community and she tried to support us in many ways. But how did she know? 10 min. later, our guest came into the kitchen and asked for a coffee.

Our center leader, Peter Zöhrer from Austria, took a lot of indemnity on himself. He witnessed very sincerely, fasted and prayed a lot, but he did not burden us. We did not feel so much pressure, we did whatever we could. Myself I had a job till the afternoon, afterwards I would take care of house and kitchen. But the comfortable life should soon change. Peter was called for another mission and members of the newly established Europe-team were moving in.

A Spanish general's son, Obidio, 18 years of age, became my new leader. He would communicate in English, which I not fully understood. He tried desperately explain to me, what "humble" means, after he made clear to me, that

I need to be more humble. On top of everything I had an unfortunate accident, hot water burnt my left arm badly and I was not allowed to work for 3 weeks. That means, I had to stay home and work with the witnessing team.

It was a very difficult time for me, I just could not witness. I felt so empty and cold. I really tried, but it was impossible.

Shortly, after these 3 weeks finished, a call came, that True Parents are coming to Camberg. Whole of Europe was expected to come. For most of us, it was the first time, to see True Parents, of course, we were very excited. Looking forward to see and hear TP we arrived in Camberg. One of my former center leaders, Inge Sorgenicht greeted me: "Oh, so good, you are here, could you take responsibility for the kitchen for the general membership? At one point we will be 800!" She herself had to attend TP, because she was an elder member.

Most other kitchen staff had to take care of TP and Korean guests cooking. She showed me the "kitchen" for the members, 2 flames and a few tables in the garage. On top of all there was not enough water. But Inge had organized everything. With the help of some members, everything worked out perfectly, like a real miracle.

We even had time, to attend some of Fathers speeches. I felt, like being carried, no difficulties at all. Inge must have taken all responsibility on her own shoulders.

When first entered the hall to see TP, Paul Werner also was in front on the stage. Paul was really an authority for us, at least next to God. But how surprised I was, compared with True Father he appeared more like a schoolboy. Indeed, even today I cannot think of any man, past or present that could reach Fathers true authority.

After being back in Regensburg, one day a call came, if I could take over the workshop kitchen in Camberg. The current kitchen sister had some problems with her hand. Oh, great, I thought, that's what I always wished to do! Here I can show what I am good at! But oh, oh, - after 2 month or so Paul Werner approached me with a serious face. "We cannot keep you here. This is a place for people to be reborn, you cannot stay here, do what you want, but you cannot stay here.

The sky crushed down on me, I thought I did a good job, at least externally, but obviously a more caring and loving person was needed. He told me, I could take an apartment somewhere, but later he asked me, if I want to go to another city, Saarbrücken or München church center. So I decided for München. For about 2 weeks I could only cry.

I felt like God doesn't want me, but I knew, I had to continue on this way. My physical Father had one time told me: "You will leave this movement, they will through you out, they can't use you, you are not good enough."

But I was stubborn, no, I will not leave. Anyway, I could not go against my conscience. Later, being at München center for a while, Paul Werner came to visit us, seeing me working in the kitchen, he asked me very kindly, how I was doing, and even at a later meeting he showed a lot of care for me. Today, I think, there had been misunderstandings in Camberg.

For the first 2 years in München I had a job at a butchery, cleaning private house and some business places, cooking and washing. It was physically very hard for me. I was running the whole day, never allowed to rest. This prevented me from spacing out and so I could help the center with finances.

I felt, I was doing something and the pressure of the center did not affect me so much.

I want to tell about some experiences at this place. I had told them, that I was a member of U.C. Since we were very much persecuted, also everyone there was talking bad or making fun of Father and U.C. One day, sitting all together in the dining room, the crucifix fell from the wall, leaving everyone shocked. After that, nobody said anything anymore about Father. As I said, it was a place of extreme hard work. When one day my foot was badly infected and I could only hopp on one foot, I was not allowed to go to a doctor, no time. But the lady of the house promised me to consult a healer of her native village, a farmer, who could find out things through spirit world and heal. Anyway, I had asked her to also ask him about Rev. Moon. Later she told me, that this farmer indeed

inquired about Father, but developed a tremendous fear, shaking all over his body. He said, that this man has incredible power, but because he was so afraid of him, he thought him on the side of evil.

In any case, this farmer told me, that at midnight, the pain would go and at 3 am everything would be fine. At midnight I got an urge to make a small cut into my swollen foot and a lot of puss came out. At 3 am everything was completely healed.

Beginning of September 1978 came a call from London that Father wanted to perform a matching and everyone 4 years in the church and 24 years old could attend. I could not believe that I should be one of them. I always had been a "problem member" and I was worried, that I would never be blessed.

But the blessing was all I was waiting for, my only hope. One old brother (Otto Waldner) had told me once, "Belief me Franziska, now you are standing on one leg, but when you have a husband, you be on two legs". I was so excited, but also full of fear. "What if Father doesn't match me, how can I continue then?"

On the 14th we should leave Germany and take the Ferry to England. Nobody went to bed the night before, the excitement was tremendous, and many things had to be prepared. The Ferry ride was like a dream, I always wanted to experience the ocean. Mr. Vincent, our country leader at that time, had tried to prepare us very well. He told us, that it is not important, whom Father proposes to us, we should only ask one question to each other: "Are you willing to live and die for the fulfillment of God's will?"

Arriving at Lancaster Gate house, we were kind of late. Father already had started speaking to the candidates. I wanted to have changed my cloth for this important event, but it was too late.

Everything was translated into English, but my English at that time, was not so good, but one German sister tried to translate for me. Soon Father started matching. He told us, that we, after being matched to go out, talk to each other, then come back and bow in front of TP. Of course, we could refuse, but Father reminded us, that the first person, he proposes to us, is usually the best one. So I decided to accept the one, Father would choose for me, no matter, what.

That moment, Father picked up. That can't be.... This short guy, walks like a monkey.... I would have never even recognized him, just would not have seen him. My physical Father and brothers are pretty tall, so that is what I expected.

And of course, he should be intellectual and artistic, but this one..... The exit was blocked by a lot of people, so he called from 5m away OK? Ok. I said, so we bowed in front of TP.

Afterwards we came to the actual questioning part. "Are you German?" he asked. "Yes", I said, "Oh no". "So what do you want", I replied. "A Japanese or Korean of course." "At least can you cook, can you take care of children?" I did not answer these questions. Remembering Mr. Vincent's education, I came to believe, that this guy was not a UC church member. I could not ask him directly, so I asked him "Do you sometimes pray?" "Well, the last 5 or 6 month I had no time" I found out, that he was a German living in America, and that today was his birthday. I could not even say: "Happy Birthday". I just told him, I needed to go to the bathroom, and from there I was looking for a corner to lay down and forget everything. After 4 hours of sleep, I felt better, so I went down to the meeting place again.

I did not even remember, how my husband to be looked like, fortunately he recognized me and said: "You took so long". He had been waiting for me. He told me, that the moment he first saw me entering the room, he knew, that I would be his wife "That orange pullover of yours got my attention", he said. That orange pullover is actually not my own, I said, I found it. He thought, it doesn't matter.

He just knew, I was the one. (I had not been so sure, maybe we had been mixed up, because everything went so fast).

He told me, how he had worked in America since 1973 in different project and at the end with the "New York Tribune". So I thought, maybe he is a journalist or something bigger than I would think of him, but he told me, that he is a driver bringing the paper from New York to Washington and distributing them there.

New York had a newspaper strike and this paper was the only one, not striking. So there was a lot of work, not much time to sleep, pray or eat. A few days ago he had to leave the United States because of Immigration problems. He was supposed to right away go back to Germany, but decided to visit someone in England.

He ended up in Lancaster Gate not the normal way. Usually everything would go through ones leader, but he had no leader at the moment. God directed him anyway. He had left all his luggage in the airport, to continue traveling to Germany. One of the most important ceremonies of our life was just a few hours away. We all tried to clean ourselves and put on our best clothes. When I asked him, if he is not going to change, he said no. Fortunately one brother borrowed him a suit. I was upset, because he was not even interested, to change his dirty socks and underwear.

But he had told me, that he never had a girlfriend, and I was so grateful for that!

The Holy Wine Ceremony brought me a feeling of true liberation, like the sun would shine for me again. Next day, we would take pictures in Hyde Park together, also we meet TP there, and going for a walk, then came time to go home. Martin left by plane going to Camberg, we went by Ferry, going back to München.

Father had told us, that the actual blessing ceremony would take place later, maybe in a year. (It turned out to be 4 years).

All the way home I felt quite elevated (a little in the clouds). Right on the Ferry I decided to begin my 7-day fast, which I had been very afraid of. In the meantime I had started a new job and the next day I would have to work again. Since our church met with so much persecution, I had to hide everything that happened and could not tell, that I was fasting.

On the 6th fasting day the cleaning woman yelled at me for sitting down in the middle of the day, because I rested for 2 minutes, but apart from that, all went well.

Since I joined UC I had not looked for work according to my education, usually I took simpler jobs in cleaning or housekeeping in order to be more free. So I was looked upon like a very lowly person.

And I had experienced quite humiliating situations in my workplaces for the first time. Once, I was told, that I could eat lunch and I set my plate on the table, but I was told, the girl has to eat in the kitchen. This was the norm in many places from now on. One time I was told, I could eat from the leftovers, but got scolded badly, because I supposedly ate something the lady of the house intended to give to the dog.

In one place, they took my little radio away, because listening to music would slow me down. In that same place I was physically kicked and I constantly heard the words: "don't walk, run..." Because I gave most of my earnings to the center, I could not afford to buy a lot of cloth. When I was cleaning shoes, there were 5 or 6 pieces of very expensive, warm angora underwear in the shoe cleaning box, like new with tiny holes.

I asked the lady of the house, if I could take some of this to wear in the winter, because I feel cold easily. She said: "I cannot let my shoes suffer, because you want to wear it, but in God's name take one. She was a kind lady, but she could not imagine, how it is to be poor.

One day, she was standing beside me in the kitchen, seemed to be shocked or surprised by something. Asking her, what happened, she said: "Your hands..... They are so different...!" From that day on, she respected me a lot.

In the very beginning, it was a little hard for me to do simple cleaning jobs, but after I saw my center leader doing the same with dignity, I thought, I can do this too.

So I wanted to do my very best in whatever I have to do. People could not understand, that my eldest brother is a med. Dr. and I work as a cleaning woman, but I had realized since long time, that one's title does not determine one's value (Character, spiritual standard).

In those days, we would all be living together in the church center, only some old people (mostly parents of members, or members with problems or those, that were not fully committed (we talked about B-members) lived in their own houses. We called our self A-members. When one day our center leader asked me to find myself a room, I was very shocked and disturbed. Again I felt rejected by God and my leaders, despite having received the honor of being matched by Father. I couldn't understand the world anymore.

It seemed he wanted to clean the center of "problem members". I was not the only one. After getting very depressed for a while, I started looking for and found a very nice place.

Looking at the house #, it had # 8, the same as my Parents and Martin's Parents house. This gave me some confirmation that everything was meant to be, also being matched with Martin.

Still my heart was heavy. The other members looked different at me and I was only like a guest in the center. Also Marti was worried. But I knew, I had to continue my religious disciplines, I had to carry my own responsibility. One other sister had become very resentful, she could not forgive. Later she got sick and died. After some time. They could not stay in the center anymore and it was difficult for them to find a new affordable place. So all members went through hard times, finding somewhere to live.

Now I understood, how God had wanted to help and protect me, because He knew, upheavals were coming.

After 2 years in my own house, I got a call from our 2. Workshop center. Regelsmühle, if I would like to take over the kitchen responsibility. And how I liked that!

The same day I wanted to move there, also our center leader needed the moving van. He wanted to leave the center with his family and go into privacy. I gave him my potted plants.

After 1 year in Regelsmühle, the big day came, the day every girl dreams of, our Blessing day. This time, it should take place in America. Our wedding dresses were being tailored and we prepared for the big journey. Martin had gone back to America 2 years ago, so we had not seen for more than 2 years. It was my 1st time flying overseas. Excitement, excitement.

By bus we were being picked up from the airport and shown around in Manhattan, which I found out is the actual center of New York. A big, old Hotel, the church had bought, the Hotel "New Yorker" was our staying place, where Martin also lived.

The 1st of July 1982 was a jubilant day. The sun seemed to brighten even the darkest corners of the city. Whole of Manhattan seemed to be excited, seeing us, the brides and grooms moving from the hotel across the street to the famous Madison Square Garden. 2075 brides in beautiful white wedding dresses and veils together with the grooms in dark suits, many relatives and friends waiting at the MSG for the big event.

It was a beautiful, dignified ceremony in grand style with our TP over it. Many leaders of other religions congratulating.

Tony Bennett singing for us.

Martin was rather pale that day and I wondered, if he had gotten "cold feet" (was afraid of his new role). Later he told me, that he had been fasting for a week, in order to fit into his wedding suit, which he bought 4 years ago).

As a symbolic "honeymoon" we traveled around Manhattan in a boat on the Hudson River and East river past the statue of liberty.

For me everything felt like a beautiful dream. I was floating on clouds, but Martin looked still very pale. After registering our marriage at NY city hall, it was time for me to go back to Germany. We had not decided yet, how,

when and where we were to move together and begin our family life, but for me it seemed best, if Martin would come back to Germany. I was not the most adventurous type, afraid to get into unknown circumstances.

So Martin would write many letters, saying, he is trying to come soon, maybe in one or two month at first, then maybe in 3 month. But when after 1 year a letter came "I might be able to come in 3 month, maybe in 3 years". I could not take it anymore. It seemed like his leader did not let him go, maybe it should not be. So, I decided to travel to NY with a group of Europeans that offered themselves to support mission work in America. We landed in Newark, NJ, quite away from NY. Martin told me, that he would pick me up at the airport, so when all the others were picked up by a bus, I wanted to wait at the airport, in order not to disappoint Martin.

I waited, waited, I don't know how many hours. I did not know what to do. I had no phone #, in any case, I did not know, how to use American phones. I did not know the language well. I could not leave my heavy luggage alone, I had been warned of thief's. I could not go anywhere. I did not know how to use taxis, everything was new and strange.

Finally I just broke out in tears. The airport seemed empty, it was late, except a group of women that appeared to be prostitutes. One of them came to me and asked, what would be the matter.

I explained, how my husband was supposed to pick me up, but never came. Oh, ok-they said (like we understand) I asked them, if they could help me to get into a taxi. The only thing, I remembered, was that Martin lived at New Yorker Hotel in New York City. Fortunately that was enough for the driver to get me there.

When I stepped out of the taxi, I dunked my foot into a deep, muddy puddle of water, just a thunderstorm had passed. That was just like the icing on a cake.

When the person on the front desk asked me if I want to talk to Martin, I said no. I don't want to see him anymore. Kindly they gave me a room for the night. Next morning, Martin knocked on my door. He explained to me, that he was sure the bus would have brought me with all the others and that he was very sorry.

After a good night sleep, I could understand and forgive. That was the beginning of a very beautiful time together.

But before we would start our family life and have children, Martin wanted me to get healthier. So he send me to live for 6 weeks to Ohio with a Korean lady who dedicated her life to the restoration of physical health. It involved to stop drinking coffee and I felt, the Kingdom of heaven would now be closed to me, for heaven without coffee is no heaven. Only because of Martin I went through and actually for 7 years refrained from coffee. Maybe it had been necessary in order to have children.

True Father had actually asked all newly blessed women to attend a 3 year witnessing mission as a foundation for our families and America. Today, I am really sorry, I did not unite with Father's direction. Because we already started our life together, it was so difficult for me. I committed halfheartedly and went back home after some time. Also I had gotten pregnant with our first son. Many things had to be prepared. On Sunday mornings we would always go to Belvedere, where Father would speak to us. Also, often he would come to the Hotel New Yorker.

We were in a very fortunate situation, feeling like NY was the center of the world, because TP were around. Martin at that time, worked in IL HWA Ginseng Company. Mr. Woo, a Korean, was responsible. He took very good care of his people. When our son was born, on the 7th of June 84 in Beekman Hospital, he send a very big beautiful bouquet of flowers and gave him the name Paul Young-Hwa. My grandfather had been waiting for a Paul so long. How could a Korean know?

We were so happy. People on the street would tell us: "This must be your first child, you have this glow on your face."

About a year later, one morning, Martin told me: "You are pregnant, this time it's a girl." 9 month later our Christine showed up at Beth Israel Hospital, Feb 19th 1986. Mr. Woo again named her. "Christine Young-Soon". Christine is also the middle name of Martin's mother.

Beginning of April 89 Father came and urged all of us to move out of the Hotel New Yorker till end of April. He felt, we should move into suburban or rural environments that big city life is not beneficial for our families. We wanted to unite with Father and agreed, to move into a church center in Flushing, Queens, till we would find an own house or apartment. I was 7 month pregnant at that time and gave birth to our second son Matthias in Beth Israel Hospital on 10th of June 1989 while living in Queens. This time, Martin received the name "Matthias Young-II" in prayer.

Matthias did not cry right after birth. Also afterwards he did not cry loud, sometimes only tears were running down his face.

After short time we got offered to rent an apartment at a member's parent's house. It was a nice place, but I realized that our children make lots of noise and we would get problems over time, so we continued looking to buy an own house.

When we found something, that would be possible to finance, I got very excited. But such a big decision we did not want to make without God. So I prayed: "Heavenly Father, you can see, we need an own house because of the children, should we buy one here in America or do you want us to go back to Germany and buy one there?"

Before I could even think anything, the answer came, unexpected: "You are not doing anything here in America and you will not be doing anything in Germany." And without words, it was very clear, that there would be a third country for us, no idea where and when. So we gave up our big dream of own house right there and then, waiting, what God had in store for us.

Never in my life had I received such a prompt answer to my prayer, even, I did not like it.

Soon, after Matthias birth, we decided, that our next child we would offer to another blessed couple, that could not have their own son or daughter. There were many that longed for a blessed child, so to whom should we offer? God had to decide. We got the idea, to wait, till someone would ask us, directly or indirectly, which actually usually nobody would do.

It happened at a Christmas celebration at IL HWA, Martin's company, very soon after. This polish brother, Jerzy Wolinski, kept looking at Matthias, that time 6 month old and said to me: "How long have we been praying for a girl like this!" "But this is a boy", I said "Yes, but how long have we been praying for a girl like this!"

We saw this as God's answer and told him, to keep praying, maybe we could give them the next child. I think, at first he did not quite belief it.

Unfortunately, the next pregnancy I lost, the one after this, also. We decided, to try one more time, if I miscarry again, maybe it was not supposed to be and we would not consider again, to offer a child.

Jerzy and his wife where very concerned and brought me to a special Russian healer. He was to make sure, the child would grow well.

Something strange happened. A Korean spiritualist, Lady Dr. Kim had said, that this would be a boy, also the Russian healer thought it to be a boy. At the same time, our Korean regional director told Jerzy very strong, to accept the child only, if it would be a boy. Jerzy was very obedient to his leader, even in his heart he desired a girl. I guess, God had His way, to deliver their baby safely.

I remember, we were sitting together with Jerzy and Teruyo, his wife, trying to find a good name for the baby. Jerzy had a long list of boy's names, when Teruyo suddenly said in a low voice: but if it is a girl, I want it to be Teresa. "Ja, Ja, of course" said Jerzy, but he was so sure it to be a boy.

On the 16th of Feb. 1992 a little Teresa Ki-Sun surprised us all. We had not considered to make gene-tests, as not to endanger the child.

In our church, this kind of offering a child is not unusual, but in society it is not often heard of. One difficult thing for me was how to explain to others, especially my family. Since we lived in America, far away from our

homeland, we decided not to let our parents and relatives know, so as not to worry them. Only to one of my siblings I had explained. Not too long after, one of my brothers inquired: "I heard, that you had to sell one of your children, because your family had not enough to eat".

I told him, that this is nonsense.

Now, that our parents have passed to spirit world, our brothers and sisters have seen pictures of Teresa and everything has calmed down a bit.

We were so happy, when several month after Teresa's birth I got pregnant again. On July 14th 1993 Jonathan Young-Shin was born at St. Johns Hospital in Queens.

Our family grew and the noise levels in our apartment too.

Our landlord had been patiently bearing but after more than 4 years, he could not take it anymore. He asked us to move out. It was not easy to find an affordable and decent place with 4 children. It took us a while and the new apartment was cockroach infested and smelled bad. The family above us was not very clean, had 3 young children, a cat and a dog, that soaked the ceiling with urine. We cleaned it well and it became livable somehow.

On 18th of June 1996 Father decided to send out each one family from Korea, Japan, America and Germany to every nation, called National Messiah providence.

I think, it was a very wise plan to raise up the standard of any nation in a balanced way, not leadership German style or Korean style or Japanese style.

Father asked mainly early members for this mission. Since he could not force anybody, many declined because of age, health or because of financial difficulties. So Father allowed younger blessings groups to attend.

First people in leadership positions or former leader were being asked. One day, Martin came home telling me, that his German friend, Joachim, our blessing group had been asked, if he wanted to participate. "How come", I said, "Is he any better than us?" Next day, Martin asked his friend: "Are you any better than us?"

When Joachim received a phone call again, how he had decided, he said: "No, I am not going, but I know someone, that likes to." Of course, we did not want to change our comfortable lifestyle, also we were not the kind of missionary types.

But I remembered my experience in prayer several years ago and felt, that we have to be open for this kind of mission. But I was so scared. When we got the phone call, if it wasn't me, that we volunteer, we said, not really, but if nobody else can be found, we go.

At first, they thought, it might not be necessary, but soon it was clear, we were needed.

I thought, God knows us, so He will guide the situation. Sure, He will give us a reasonably comfortable country, because He knows my health is not so strong, besides, we have 4 young children.

We all had to go to at least 40 day workshop to Cheonpyong. Martin attended with the 1st group from August 1st-Sep. 9th 1996. Every participant would choose by Korean lottery system his or her family's mission country.

When Martin came back, he did not tell me straight out, he made me guess. "It lies north of the equator" sounded at best not African to me, but I must say, I was never good at geography.

At last, he had to reveal the whole truth. Equatorial Guinea, right at the equator, at the center of Africa. Something must have protected me from losing my conscience or getting a heart attack. Maybe I did not take it for real. Martin told me, that already as a boy he was aware of EG that he heard about it in the news and he never forgot it.

In the meantime I had found out that I was pregnant again and this concerned me greatly. How could I bring a new baby to survive in Africa? But whatever we offered ourselves and could not go back.

On Oct 1st 1996 I myself started 40 day workshop in Cheon pyeong. At that time it was not a comfortable place like it is today, there were only temporary buildings. When it rained, everything was muddy, there was only Korean food, in short, it was very difficult. Especially the food was so nauseating for me, almost never meat, no potatoes, always kimchee and rice.

One time, when I thought, it is not possible to go on anymore, we had a soup with chicken and potatoes and I felt, God had noticed me. Towards the end, everybody should fast 7 days, but I did not, because of my pregnancy, even I was not sure, the baby was still alive.

I asked Hoon Mo Nim, but she did not say anything. During this time 3 older sisters had told me that my family should not go for this mission we would only become a burden and even destroy the nation. But I remember, that Father said, whoever attends this workshop, has to go and also, that nobody can tell us anything otherwise, only Father and that we stand directly under Fathers command.

Even one of these sisters had communicated with Rev. Kwak, who send us later a letter, that we don't need to go, but he leaves it up to us (because he knew Fathers direction). Father told us, that we have to take own financial responsibility, that the church will not support us.

Also we should stay in our mission country for at least 3 generations.

Sometimes I was not so sure anymore, if God really wanted us to go. Maybe God also realized our many short comings, then again, many people encouraged us, reminding us, that we are only the last of 4 families there, we should just support with whatever we can.

End of October, Martin came with our children again, because we all had to attend Cheonpyeong. Father had told us, that for many of us it might not be possible to come again here.

Traveling with 6 people to Cheonpyeong was expensive and we had now a \$ 10.000 credit card debt. So we would first have to pay back our debt, make money for the journey to Africa and funds to stay there for a while. And we should go as quickly as possible. Some people just declared bankruptcy, but I felt strongly, our foundation has to be honest.

I told God "Heavenly Father, if you don't want us to go, just prevent us from making money. But in the meantime we will try our best."

Being back in America, after 4 month of pregnancy, I miscarried. This time I felt a big burden fallen off my shoulders, because I knew, it was almost impossible to keep a newborn alive with all the changes of climate, malaria etc.

Martin had changed to another workplace because of better payment, but unfortunately very soon he was being dismissed. So, what now? It turned out a blessing in disguise. For the next 6 month he would receive unemployment insurance.

And he had lots of time to do fundraising, our famous flower business. I would go with Jonathan in the baby carriage to Manhattan and buy flowers, while the other children where in school, wrap them up or make arrangements. Martin would sell them afternoons or night time.

For special days like Christmas, Valentine's Day or mother's day we set up a stand somewhere on the street and worked together there.

Even the children (Paul and Christine) helped selling leftovers.

Our debt were soon paid off and in May 97 we had enough money (about \$ 10.000 extra) traveling to Africa and living there for a while. So, there was no reason anymore to hope, we should not go. Now, it got real scary.

We had connected to EG. We got told, to send them money. OK, we kept paying 10% donation to the center, but asked our pastor now, if we could send from now on donation to EG. We also had asked EG, if there was any

place where we could stay with 6 people. We received answer, that there was a broken room, which we could use, whatever that meant.

(I saw already the rain coming thru the ceiling and other nightmares).

One day, I realized, we need to go right now without delay, otherwise I will die of fear. So, we started selling all the things not needed and packing necessary items.

The American NM sister (we would go as Germans) had actually told us, that Father supposedly gave direction, not to take anything with us, but I never heard this and we prepared many things, we thought we need, including computer, printer, toys, books, precious photos, all together 21 some very big boxes and send them by ship ahead of us, so things would be there, when we arrive.

In April Martin had met our Korean NM Rev. Cho in NY. Father had presented each country with a very precious set of fishing equipment, which Rev. Cho asked Martin, to get safely to EG. This set also we send with our private things.

The children we had taken out of school, even the school year was not finished, which would create some problems later.

We planned to visit our parents and relatives in Germany for the last time, we wanted to spend 1 month there.

During 14 years family life in NY, we had accumulated tremendous amounts of treasures which we wanted to sell before we go. The selling was slow, so on the last day we displayed everything in front of the house at the roadside. I focused on selling, hoping to collect some more money for our survival in Africa.

2 hours before the flight was supposed to take off. Martin was not back from giving up our boxes. I sat collapsed in a closet, having not packed many important things yet, thinking I am not going to make it. I might just die here and there.

Suddenly I realized, there were not sufficient suitcases and had to call someone to quickly buy me a set. 1 hour before takeoff, Martin was home now, the young Jewish woman living above us saw the dilemma, put our luggage (23 pieces) and the children into her car, told us not to worry, she knows many policeman and raced us thru red lights to the airport. Seeing the young children, they allowed us into the plane, even everything was closing, without many formalities.

Never in my life have I left behind me such a chaos, but I guess some people were happy about all the abandoned riches.

I felt terrible, chaos behind me and fear ahead of me, but at least a few hours of peace, riding on top of the clouds.

Also, seeing my family in Germany was another challenge ahead, there was no one that agreed with my decision to join Rev. Moon's church.

We were seen as these poor, brainwashed, manipulated, abused children that have lost their way. Also our children did not understand their grandparent's language. How good it would have been, had our children been able to naturally grow up with grandparents and uncles and aunts. But the persecution of TP was great, by my family, who were devoted Catholics, by whole Germany and almost everywhere in the Christian world.

Terrible lies emerged, that made it impossible for my family to even open their mind a little bit, so we could explain. As a result, we got disinherited by part of Martin's family, some of my nieces and nephews we were not allowed to see out of fear, they could be influenced.

As we suffered from this whole situation, my parents suffered too, thinking it was their fault, having made mistakes, this being the reason that we searched for another God.

Also our going to Africa scared them, more than once I heard: "You are killing your children!" For Martin's parents it was more worries about financial future. "What about health insurance, what about pension!!"

Our flight was booked, all bridges to a secure life style cut off, and we could only trust God, who had guided us this far anyway, is there any real security in this world?

Finally, the day of takeoff came. For me it felt like jumping into a black hole, something like dying. The children were not aware yet, what was expecting them, just another adventure. Paul was 13, Christine 11, Matthias 8, and Jonathan 3. He celebrated his birthday already in Africa. In one way, I had felt, the children might be more secure in Africa.

America worried me, easy lifestyle led to moral decay.

Strangely, in our small village, in a food shopping market, they had mosquito nets (which I never saw before) and I had gotten some, which I was very grateful for later. Also I packed in some pots and pans and silverware and other household items I had bought as a young girl in preparation for marriage life, that later proofed very useful.

Leaving Germany, it did not occur to me, that I would never meet my parents or parents in law again on this earth. For the children also it had been the only opportunity to get to know them. It had been difficult to find a real heartistic connection, because after all we were and stayed children of a strange and dangerous sect leader.

Like always, we enjoyed our plane flight, with exiting food and movies. Touching down in Douala, Cameroon, we realized a very different world is laying out before us. Vegetation looks nothing like familiar and stepping out the plane, this damp heat almost took our breath, only black faces and poverty all around. We got picked up by our EG country leader, a man from DRC Congo, who's family lived in Cameroon. First he brought us into our hotel, were we stayed for 3 days, before we could get our flight to EG.

Even we found the hotel somehow dirty and not well taken care of, it was one of the better ones and we could slowly adjust to the different standard.

We were surprised Mr. Nsimba, so was our country leaders name, had a servant girl for his family, because in our homeland only very rich people could afford this. Not only Mr. Nsimba had been in Cameroon, but also some Japanese Women's Federation Members belonging to EG.

I think, they tried to do some fundraising in Cameroon, because in EG it seemed to be difficult, to make any money. This was also one of the reasons Mr. Nsimbas wife stayed in Douala, she had a small business here.

Also Rev. Cho, our Korean NM waited here for us.

After 3 days (20th of June 1997) we all together boarded the plane to EG, capital city Malabo, situated on an Island in the Atlantic Ocean. (This was only part of EG. The far larger part was the mainland, which looks like a piece cut out of Gabon.)

Here also, touching down, everything felt very different, but it was not like Douala.

The airport was really small and dirty, more like an animal house. All our belongings were being searched. We had some church related tapes, they wanted to first watch. They did not want anything to come into the country that could shake up their political system. They looked through all our things with a lot of curiosity. When they came to a bag with the rollerblades of our children, their eyes got big like those of children at Christmas.

They never saw something like that. (It is true, no western person ever would bring their children here.) Finally, they let us go, but not without having us pay some money.

On the way to Malabo we passed a farm vehicle, a tractor with cart, which reminded me on my village and comforted me. A sweet water fish, being thrown into saltwater finding a bubble of sweet water must feel like this.

Arriving at the church center, quite a crowd of members and Women's Federation members were waiting for us in the court yard. Some lady put a bunch of flowers into Martin's hands.

Their expectations of us must have been so high. Also, they must have thought us to be very rich. (All white people are rich.). We distributed some small present to each one, we had brought with us from America.

Then we were guided into an African style partially wooden church, they had built in the court yard, were a nice cake and a colorful array of foods waited for us.

Later we were shown to our room in the 2nd floor of the main building. Someone already brought all our luggage up there. Thanks God, it was a room without leaks, but it felt damp and smelled moldy. The only furniture was one double sized bed. No shelf, no hook, no nothing. Just the bare stone floor. Later we received another bed, nothing more.

How grateful I was for the blankets, pillows, sleeping bags and mosquito nets we had brought with us!

When we left America, it still was quite cool, so we did not really take the summer cloth into our hand luggage, believing the sea shipment would arrive with us or at least very soon after. We were still thinking German way.

But how we were mistaken!

Month after month passed, no news of our luggage. After about half a year, we received message, our things had arrived, but only one box of church magazines was intact, another one, a big cooler with kitchen things was left with a few, some broken plates and a few pots without lids and lids without pots, and one box with children's games, all half missing was there.

Basically we lost everything. We had suffered a lot, having no appropriate cloth to wear. Our computer that might have connected us to civilization was gone. I felt so lost and lonely.

One time, when I was going thru the rain to the market, I was send their many times, my feet were muddy, Jesus, at least I think it was Jesus, said to me: "I many times had dirty feet, when I was going around the sea of Galilea". And I could understand, how lonely and miserable he had felt.

Concerning our clothing, we could not spend a lot of money and at that time we did not know where to buy used things. From Japan they would always send many boxes of used clothing, which women's federation would sell making a bazaar, attracting many people.

Our Korean NM Rev. Cho told me strongly, not to buy things here, only after all other people had chosen. This was hard for me, but I understood, that, as one of the leaders, we had to keep this standard, and even today, I am grateful we got trained this way.

Apart from it being hot, wet, dirty there were many other challenges. It took time to get used to taking water out of a bucket. Only in the raining season it would run for about 1-2 hours out the faucet.

And when there was no more water, there was no more water. Sometimes we had to use the same water many times for washing ourselves, our laundry, the floors and finally to flush the toilettes. When Japanese sisters washed the dishes, they used very little water, which looked like thick soup. Sometimes in the rain season, water would come up to the 2nd floor for short time, sometimes we could get it from downstairs at the court yard, sometimes we had to search for some far away.

I remember an incident shortly after we arrived. Next day was a Holy Day and I wanted to prepare an offering table. All the water was gone, but I had to wash fruits and we needed to clean the house.

Martin was out witnessing with some members and I asked Mr. Nsimba if he could carry me some water. "Of course not" he replied, "my position! Send your children!" "Where can they get water, they don't know anything here."" Let them follow other people!" At around midnight the children came back crying, that they had found none. In any case, they could not have carried it, because they were not physically strong like Africans. Fortunately Martin came home and got me some.

When I went out on the street, there was nothing familiar, you only would see black faces.

Also the language was unfamiliar. Spanish was official language, but many people spoke fang or bubi, local dialects. Only few people spoke English, or pidgi, which has some English words.

From America I was used to see lots of black people, but here it was different. The spirit was different. Before we came, we found out, that 95% of all people were Catholics and I thought, oh, so they are no different from us. But when I heard, that many men have 2 or more wives and that even some Catholics priest have children. I realized, this is not Catholicism as I know it.

Something that struck me, coming to Malabo, there was no noise like repairing streets or building houses, you could not even hear a hammer being used. There were deep holes in the streets by rain you could step into one being covered by muddy water, in the dry season dogs or chicken were resting there. There were many empty stores, sometimes in a far corner a lady selling a few bananas or something and everything being covered by dust – broken windowpanes looking hopeless.

Some places were livelier, but it was nauseating for me to go there, like the food market. Most salespeople where women, having their little mostly very dirty table with different goods. Some sold only very small portions like heaps of 10 noodles, 1 teaspoon tomato paste, 1 bouillon cube, oil measured by the cap closing the bottle. It showed how miserable poor many people were.

There where fruits and vegetable on a muddy plastic on the floor besides bread in wooden crates, dogs lifting their hind leg at it. There were tables with met and defrosted fish, millions of flies surrounding it and for wealthier people monkeys, crocodiles, porcupines, snakes and antelopes emitting a horrible stench in the heat. Under the tables they would keep their young babies in cardboard boxes or little children were playing in the mud.

Getting sick from dirty surroundings seemed not to worry anybody. I saw actually drinking rainwater from the street, running through a used car battery.

This was the part of the market I mostly encountered in the beginning, buying bananas, oranges, vegetables and atangas (a special very oily fruit, only home in that region). Bread I had to buy in a special bread store in another neighborhood, hoping it was somehow clean.

There was only that kind of bread, like a baguette, white bread, that had not much nutritional value (apart from the little worms and tiny black beetles that sometimes made up 10% of the flour). One time back home from the bread store, I lost my way (I have very bad sense of orientation) and accidentally passed by a military barrack. I saw some rusty armored vehicles standing in the court yard. Right away, soldiers came out and told me, that it is forbidden to pass by here and that I would have to pay punishment.

Today I understand, why those vehicles looked so decayed. I bet none of them could move an inch.

I told them, that I just want to buy bread and had no money left in my pocket. So, they trotted like dogs behind me, followed me up to the door and only left, after I put 2.000 CFA = \$ 4 into their hands. Soldiers and police where to be feared, as I learned over time.

When I asked Mr. Nsimba, why they behave like that, he told me, that they were very poor and tried to get some money. Indeed, they all looked extremely skinny, but they seemed to always get alcohol. At that time I could not believe, that people would not be paid for their work, but later I encountered many with that experience.

In the beginning, we were 14 people in the center, Mr. Nsimba with the Japanese and our family with Rev. Cho. It was decided, that each group pays 3.500 CFA a day for food (7000 CFA = \$ 14). At first the Japanese sisters would do the cooking. Japanese are very small and skinny, seem to do well on very little food, a lot of work and little sleep.

Even Mr. Nsimba, a big African man, lived like that. So we felt, we should not complain and adjust. Even Rev. Cho never complaint, every morning he just ate his ½ bread with one banana. To put on the bread, there was only this bad tasting margarine that stuck to the gum, for lunch or dinner, we rarely had any meat, just sometimes a can of sardines mixed with tomato sauce, sometimes a little egg or fried rice.

Even a whole fish (mackerel) would have been very cheap, but because of the flies I guess, nobody bought them. Anyway, one day, there was a whole small fish on every plate, when Paul suddenly burst out: "Mama, did you see, their fishes are bigger than ours!!!"

I don't think, it was true, but we were all hungry, I guess.

At that time, also our Japanese NM couple had visited for a while and helped with many things. Mr. Goto was a very practical man and he installed a little pump downstairs, so we did not need to carry the water up.

Mrs. Goto came to observe our situation and told me: "It is ok, if you buy some extra food for your family."

Once, she made breakfast, she fried some bread in oil turned it in sugar, it was so satisfying and delicious.

Later we took turns, cooking, 1 week Japanese sisters, 1 week, I. Of course, I could adjust a bit our needs, but in reality for 7000 CFA there was not much we could buy. The rice was paid by the Japanese, but it was the cheapest kind of broken rice with little stones.

It was hard for me, to clean out the stones and moldy rice, before I could cook it. I was always so tired, especially because I had to wash all our laundry always by hand. This required more strength from me, then I could generate. Nobody see also, that alone I had to do the same work cooking and shopping and cleaning the dishes, that the others would share between 5 people. The man seemed not to interfere with women's business at all.

Africans and Orientals seemed to have similar traditions.

The Japanese sisters could not understand my situation most of them, they had not started their family life yet and had no children. But in the meantime they had stayed for 3 years in EG and I am sure they also had their share of suffering.

In 1995 one of them, Motoko Shiroma, had lost her life here.

She died after having had malaria, most likely from a dangerous medication, which is not being given anymore.

After Motoko's death, many members and especially women's federation members had joined (ca. 150). It seems, for every little progress, extreme indemnity is necessary here in EG.

Indeed it felt still, that, if we wanted to progress only one step, we had to fight our way thru thick glue and if we were not careful, we could be pulled back 2 steps. On this place I would like to insert some memories of first German missionary Annegret Landwehr, who started working in EG. In 1982 till 1992 because it describes much of the spirit it describes much of the spirit and kind of fight we also encountered.



The Words of the Landwehr Family

Returning to my country In Heavenly Father's Hands

Annegret Landwehr

March 1982



Recently I had an incredible experience showing me that our lives are truly in Heavenly Father's hands, no matter how much Satan attacks us.

Part of my new country, Equatorial Guinea, including the capital, Malabo, is on an island about 70 kilometers off the coast of Cameroon, Central Africa. Three flights a week used to connect the island with Cameroon, but two days after I had taken one of these flights, the only plane crashed. When I heard that, I already had a premonition that Satan was trying to prevent me from going back to my country.

Before going there in the first place, I was prepared for anything, because that country had just survived 11 years of a very bloody dictatorship. The country is in a desolate state, like after a war, and the living conditions are very difficult. So I expected the worst and hoped for the best. Little did I know that just to reach there again would in itself be an adventure.

There was no plane anymore, but I was determined to reach there somehow. So what should I do? There are no regular boats going back and forth either, but I had heard that there are a few pirogues which traffic with Malabo. Since I like adventures and had an African brother, Zinga Luemba, accompanying me, I thought we would give it a try. We contacted those fishermen in Victoria, a town on the Cameroonian coast, and after a few days, with the help of one young man, one of them agreed to take us across.

We left early in the morning before dawn, and it was then that I fully realized that I was actually in a smuggler's boat. Since there is a shortage of basically everything in Malabo, these "fishermen" take advantage of the situation by selling things like flour, rice, onions and drinks over there. Naturally, they try to avoid paying customs. Now I understood why they had put us off a few times. Since we were not regular passengers and carried no merchandise, they were quite suspicious in the beginning. Did they really think that we were spying on them? How surprised they were when they realized that we were serious. They never thought that a "white lady" would ever enter a pirogue. I was glad to be able to rectify some of their concepts about white people.

We had just left the outskirts of the natural harbor when the "canoe-man" realized that the propeller of the engine was broken. Since the sun had already risen, we had to hide behind an islet, out of sight by the customs

officials and to wait for another canoe to pass which would get us a new propeller. The pirogue had certainly seen better days; now it was leaking, and one young man had to continuously bail out the water with a bucket. But it seemed reliable, having made this trip many times.

Eventually, three hours later, we were heading for Malabo. Normally, the trip takes about four hours. After three hours, the other people in the pirogue began to argue in Pidgin, a kind of local broken English which sounds very funny. From what I could gather, they had quite different opinions about where "the Malabo" was supposed to be. The canoe-man tried to follow their directions -- all at the same time, it seemed. Everybody was so convinced that he was right, since he had been going this way hundreds of times. It was a clear example of disunity among fallen people. After a while it was quite obvious that we were lost! Since we wanted to save petrol, we had to stop the engine. The arguments continued. People's morale dropped continuously. The merciless sun kept burning incessantly. They complained about thirst and hunger.

During the rainy season, visibility is very good, so the island can be seen from Victoria. However, during the present dry season, or "Harmattan" season, it is always misty. Harmattan is what they call the dry northeast trade wind here, blowing from the Sahara desert. During this time it is quite difficult to find Malabo by boat during the day. During the night the pirogues find their way with the help of the lighthouses. But because of our broken propeller, we had left long after dawn.

Thinking about our situation, I realized that I didn't have the slightest feeling of fear or worry. I knew that Heavenly Father wanted us to reach Malabo, and I was sure that He had guided us so far in order to succeed. In spite of recent incidents of people drifting on the sea for days without finding their way -- some were lost forever -- I had faith that we would reach either Malabo or Victoria that same day.

At about 3:00 in the afternoon, we sighted a ship and immediately made for it. What a funny situation: a small pirogue trying to stop a big ship! We tried everything to make them notice us. But it passed. Yet, I was sure that Heavenly Father had sent this ship to help us, and I was right. Shortly afterwards, when people had already given up hope, the ship turned around. It was a French ship on its way to Cameroon. They were quite amused at our situation, but agreed to help us. They led us in the direction of the coast of Cameroon. After only 15 minutes (how close we had been all the time!) we could see the shoreline, and the ship took its own course. Everybody was relieved. Just before reaching the coast, however, the petrol was finished. Fortunately, there were a few canoes, so one person was sent to buy petrol. He returned--it seemed after an eternity -- at about 10:00 p.m. We reached the safe harbor after midnight, having spent 21 hours on the sea -- on top of numerous sacks of onions. We felt aches and pains in every bone and every muscle of our bodies.

The following day we made new arrangements with the help of our friend. It dawned on me how much Satan was actually trying not to let us reach Malabo, when this young man, while helping us, escaped death by a hair's breadth, when a coconut dropped right in front of him. "This is getting really serious," I thought. But I told Heavenly Father we would not get discouraged by Satan's attacks. After this, I was even more confident that we would actually reach Malabo.

Three days later, we took course again for Malabo. We left together with a second pirogue early in the morning, before dawn. Everybody was convinced that this time we would make it. It was the same pirogue, with the same people, but the canoe-man was the brother of the first man. He was more experienced -- so they said. They call him "Fine Face," though his appearance doesn't live up to that name! This time the sea was very rough, the waves were constantly sweeping into the boat, and soon everyone was completely soaked. It was still dark. Soon we discovered that we had lost the other pirogue. I couldn't figure out the reason why, but most of our petrol supply was in the other pirogue. Since we couldn't go ahead without a sufficient supply, we had to turn back. By the time we were eventually ready to leave again, the sun had already risen.

Three hours later, I was wondering if the experience of a few days before would repeat itself. People started arguing again. The canoe-man, though keeping a steady course all the time, wasn't so sure any more that he was going in the right direction. Well, we seemed to be in a quite familiar situation. You might ask why these

fishermen don't use a compass. Well, this is Africa, not America or Europe. At one point, we saw another pirogue in the distance, but when we came closer it turned out to be a big log, which I was sure we had passed during our first attempt.

Suddenly somebody pointed to the horizon, quite sure that he saw the silhouette of Mount Malabo. Soon we all saw something and get all excited. What a disappointment when Mount Malabo turned out to be Mount Cameroon, the very place where we had come from. We must have made a big circle. How was this possible? We took a new course, 100 percent sure this time that we were now heading for Malabo. Believe it or not, after another few hours, Malabo still wasn't in sight. Did we lose track again? The continuous arguments about who was right and who was to blame for our predicament were interrupted by the noise of an airplane that seemed to be descending. It had to be heading for Malabo!

Full of new courage and hope, we followed the direction of the plane. Fortunately, this time we had taken enough petrol. After about two hours, we dimly made out something in the distance. It had to be Malabo, finally. But what was it? It wasn't possible! The silhouette of that mountain looked too familiar. It was Victoria again. By this time, the canoe-man got really worried. He had made this trip hundreds of times without ever failing to reach Malabo. Some kind of witchcraft had to be involved. He didn't know that I understood most of what he was saying. Looking at everyone, he said, "Somebody in this boat must be wearing an evil ring; someone ask that white woman there. Maybe she has something to do with it." The worst thing they could do, I thought, was to throw me overboard. They reminded each other that recently a boy and girl had lost their way and had drowned at sea. The arguments became hotter. Someone suggested to pray to "Papa God."

Some evil force seemed to have an influence over the pirogue. I began to realize that what these people intuitively figured out wasn't so wrong at all. The brother and I really seemed to have something to do with the whole problem. Of course they couldn't understand that a spiritual battle was going on between Heavenly Father and Satan -- with us right in the middle.

Again, I wasn't a bit frightened throughout the whole trip. It became more and more real to me how Satan is using people, especially when they are laying a base for disunity. Each person in the boat was so sure that he was right. They were so worried about the money and the time they were losing throughout this adventure. Since the canoe-man refused to pay back any money, they continued arguing. I prayed that they would not become violent and cause the pirogue to capsize. Finally people came to terms and decided to return to Victoria. This time we had spent "only" 13 hours on the sea. Were we to try again one more time, after two unsuccessful attempts, or did Heavenly Father want us not to risk our lives again? That night I wasn't so sure. Was it Satan attacking, or was Heavenly Father telling us to give up because it was too dangerous? We were praying for an answer.

The next morning when I woke up, my whole body was aching, as if I had literally been beaten up. My brother told me he had dreamt that "Fine Face" had beaten me. I had had a dream, too, in which Rev. Kwak came to see me here in Africa. Shaking my hand, he asked, "Now what is the problem?" He seemed to know and understand our situation. Now both of us, my brother and I, were sure that while Satan had succeeded twice in preventing us from reaching Malabo, the third time Heavenly Father would without a doubt be the victor. So we were going to try one more time. This time, however, we would not take the same pirogue again.

Four days later, late at night, we were about to leave for the beach again when Satan attacked one more time. Running to stop a taxi, my brother fell and hurt himself so badly that blood was dripping from his hands, elbow and toes. This must be Satan's last big attempt, I thought. He surely wanted us to give up and go to a hospital. But the brother and I were determined not to do so. On our way we stopped at a pharmacy -- which fortunately was open so late at night -- and then rushed down to the beach. This time -- the third attempt -- we reached Malabo in just four and a half hours, without any complications.

It's incredible. It took us exactly 17 days to finally reach our destination. What an adventure! It had really been a fight between the good and evil forces. We were so grateful when we approached the island and realized how precious and important this country must be for Heavenly Father. Otherwise, Satan wouldn't have tried so hard to

prevent us from reaching there. The "Victoria" adventure had ended in victory for Heavenly Father. This experience showed me so clearly that I have no control over my physical life, but if I am willing to give it up for the sake of the providence, then Heavenly Father takes care of it 100 percent. It was a good opportunity to test our faith and determination.

All the time on the sea, I thought about our True Father and how much time he spends on the ocean. During the night, at times the sky was covered with millions of stars, and the waves caused by our pirogue showed a phosphorescent glow. Surrounded by the peace of nature, I felt so close to Heavenly Father and could understand our True Father's relationship with the ocean more deeply.

This experience has truly been an unforgettable adventure. All in all, the whole adventure took exactly 21 days. I felt like Moses leading the Israelites through the wilderness. Because my brother was able to overcome his fears and worries and we were united centering on the goal, we could be victorious and enter Canaan -- Equatorial

Guinea.

I happen to have extreme fear and disgust of worms and wormlike creatures. As it seemed not enough, every time I lifted a sponge or piece of cloth in kitchen or bathroom or even inside the toothbrush glass there were maggots. One day O found several ca 5-7 cm long wormlike creatures in our room. My hair stood up.

I kept our room very carefully clean and still – till I realized, they fell from the ceiling, sometimes into our hair and neck. I thought I will die, I cannot take this one! One day I saw millions of them, crawling up the balcony so as to cover every mm of the wall.

They seemed to come from a neighboring meadow. It was like a horror movie, but it didn't bother anybody except me. Soon I would have my first malaria, I think, I was the first one in our family.

Never before I had felt so close to death. The kind of malaria we used to get was the most deadly one. I was hallucinating for several days having high fever and pain. One brother Deogracias, worked in the hospital, he gave me some common malaria medication, and also he put me on a drop, but I was slow to recover, almost 2 weeks. I was incapacitated in bed. I felt like I would not survive this a 2nd time.

But of course, there was a 2nd time and many more, despite being so careful with mosquito nets, screen covered doors and windows and even special smoke in the night. Only after some time Deogracias entrusted us with another medication, artesunate from china.

It shortened our suffering a lot, but it was not given to us, because they were afraid, if we would not take it correctly, the malaria would mutate and in that case, there would be no help for anybody anymore. That's why they never gave it to Guineans. It was like the last secret weapon.

In September, after summer vacation, it was time for the children to enter school. Asking Mr. Nsimba about the best school, he suggested a school of an American 7-day Adventist church. It was not too far away and all children could attend there.

Little did we know of the quality of those schools. We thought it to be similar to America, where there was no big difference between private, church or government schools.

All schools here had to be paid for, there was one French school that was unaffordable for us, one Spanish school that could only take our oldest son Paul, so we decided for the 7-day Adventist school, so at least the children would be together.

How much we regretted later that decision!

After 1 year, Matthias came home with an empty report card. When we asked the teachers what happened, they told us, that they don't know anything about Matthias 3rd grade.

We asked Matthias, and he told us, that he could not read the teachers handwriting on the blackboard, because in America the teachers would write in printed letters, also here would not be any schoolbooks available.

Nobody ever seemed to have talked to him. In America he had been an ok student, and he could read very well. Also the language was not the problem, because all children had learned Spanish very quickly from their friends on the street.

We still decided to put Matthias into an English speaking Nigerian school, which was a bit expensive, but he seemed to be doing well there.

In terms of mission work, Rev Cho had done a lot of outreach activity to government people. He had done street cleaning together with the members and he actually later motivated the government to begin cleaning their city. He donated 300 African brooms. Bit by bit this developed, at least in the inner city.

In the beginning sometimes soldiers would do the job. Actually the first time, all the ministries were ordered to send its people, including the ministers, to help clean.

In later years I saw for a while professional machines. Later women were being paid to take responsibility for a certain neighborhood.

Rev. Cho was much respected, so even government ministers put their signature as members of family federation.

At that time, even high level people were relatively poor and had hope to benefit from our organizations.

Also IRFF had a good name, beginning with Annegret, who brought substantial medical donations from Europe into the country. Also she established an English teaching school, which became famous. Many people in leadership positions had studied here.

EG was officially democratic, but in reality a dictatorship. Its allies were the Soviet Union, North Korea, Cuba and China. Communism was trying to plant its poisonous roots. Many young men and women would receive scholarships for studying in one of those nations.

But also EG was connected to Spain, the former Colonizer and France who had still authority in the region. Also the FCFA was connected to the French franc. So there were oppositions groups supported by Spain, that tried to get rid of the current government, but were quite weak.

People of those groups had to endure harsh treatment, many times imprisonment, torture or even death.

We sometimes wondered why Rev. Cho did not support these opposition groups, but later we understood. It would only have led to more bloodshed and insecurity.

In Nov. of 97 there was supposed to be a big blessing. Rev. Cho together with Japanese sisters and Guinean members also Martin, would go from house to house to educate couples about true family values.

Many of those that lived with only one spouse, could receive the Holy Wine and were invited for the blessing ceremony.

The original Japanese Women Federation sisters, who had been working hard for 3 years in EG, had left in august and a new group of mostly young and inexperienced members took their place. Also Rev. Cho had to go back to Korea, being called by Father. Mr. Goto and his wife also could stay only temporarily, because their advanced age made it difficult for them to endure the harsh conditions.

That left the responsibility for the blessing ceremony with our family and Mr. Nsimba. Unfortunately as Rev. Cho had left, it became difficult for Mr. Nsimba and the members to accept us in the highest advising position.

Truly, we did not understand and could not love our African brothers and sisters very well. I guess, we expected them to turn into something like little Germans, honest, straight, punctual, exact, clean, obedient overnight.

For the blessing we expected quite a lot of people to attend. We rented a hall of a college (Martin Luther) for this day. Martin and I would have to lead the ceremony.

The walls needed to be painted, decorations to be fastened. I was busy to work with the cook that we hired for the day, to prepare dinner. Mr. Nsimba and Japanese sisters would take care of the hall. As the ceremony started, we had only a few minutes, to dress in Holy robes and prepare to give the blessing.

The banner had not been put up inside the hall and no registration had taken place. We were devastated. How could we connect to the couples, if we did not have their names?

We felt a lot of opposition from all members, as soon as the ceremony was finished, the lights turned off. The food was brought in and all focused on eating, leaving leftovers, chicken bones lying around.

Because of the dark, even some people used the corners as toilets. Right after, I had to go home, to finish up things there, thinking the members would take care of the hall naturally.

But how embarrassed I was when next day the director, Trinidad Morgades, a woman that respected Father very much, told us, never again to ask for the hall, to leave things in such a condition!

As if things were not bad enough, April 18 2000 Mr. Nsimba decided to go back to Cameroon to his family for a while. We have had hope, he could help us find the couples that had received the blessing, so we could help them to establish blessed families.

All the efforts of the last few months – for nothing -. Only few of the couples we knew and we tried to take care of them. One problem was, that we could not speak and understand the Spanish language, and in general we lacked wisdom and love and could not deal well with people, whether with our African members nor with the new Japanese sisters.

At one point Rev. Cho forbade me to talk to Japanese sisters. I guess we Germans are sometimes not the most diplomatic ones. But we tried to support them and their women's federation work as good as we could.

One time I baked a simple coffee cake for a women's federation meeting and earned a lot of unexpected praise.

Why don't you sell this kind of cake, they asked me. I had to consider this, because already half of our money was gone and we still had no idea, how to continue. Marti already had tried to find a job, but there was nothing for him, since he did not have a higher education. Simple jobs also Guineans could do, so we were not allowed to take them.

For the next women's federation meeting, I tried to sell my cake, but it was not a very successful attempt. More than half was eaten by our little Jonathan, he really missed sweet things, and when I tried to sell a reasonable sized piece of cake for 300 FCFA (30 cents).

People found it too expensive but asked me "Why don't you cut it in 3 pieces and we buy one for 100 CFA?"

This tiny size was the future size and price to be accepted by all people. So we began to sell in front of our door, sometimes I, sometimes Martin.

It was very slow, but we were excited about every penny profit that could contribute to our living expenses.

The first problems came, I was not allowed anymore by the Japanese to use the center kitchen oven, since it was a private enterprise. I was shocked about so much coldness, but also understood, that we had to absolutely divide public and private matters.

So I bought our own gas oven and gas bottle, placing it in the hallway at the entrance door, since in the kitchen was no space. (In one way, I was glad, because the old oven worked badly).

Big changes were coming. Already few months ago it had become clear, that the current apartment was too small for all of us. Through a women's federation member, Teresa, the 2nd wife of the minister of Interior at that time, we found a new place in the inner city, very close to the President's residence.

At first, I did not like it, but over time, I became truly grateful when I realized, how God had everything prepared for us. But first, the landlord needed to repair the roof, which was badly leaking. They repaired it, and still water would run again and again. We had the key, but could not move in.

Finally, I again was very sick with malaria, Martin was in South America for a meeting, Mr. Nsimba and Rev. Cho not in the country. The day before New Year (1998) the landlord commanded, that the house would be vacated till next day. I could not leave the bed yet and had no idea, how. After a lot of pleading, he allowed us one more day. With help of some members, we moved that day.

Rev. Cho had already before decided, who would live in what part of the house. Our family would get 3 rooms for private use. Finally we had plenty of space. We were to pay half of all the expenses like rent, water, electricity. The other half was public and would be paid by the church, which Mr. Goto took responsibility for.

Martin was given the care for all finances and bookkeeping and Mr. Goto reminded us again, our family should never touch public money!

Because we left the old apartment, we also lost our little church in the courtyard. So for the time being, we had to designate part of our new place as church rooms and also as classrooms for our English school as well as meeting place for women's federation.

In our new home we felt a lot more free, no worms, no maggots, but at times it was like a beehive.

Also we had to continue and expand our cake business. At first, we sold in front of the house on a little table.

After a while a young Cameroonian offered us to sell in the market. In return he could eat with us and would receive 10% of his sales. In the beginning it went well but after some weeks he sold only little and we had no profit anymore, so we explained to him, that under those circumstances we could not feed him anymore, so he left us, taking some stolen money with him.

We asked our church members if they would want to try this job, but they felt, that a man cannot do this.

So Martin, Paul and Christine started going to the market with their small square plastic boxes full of tiny pieces of cake. For the children this was an opportunity to make some money.

Many African children were doing this kind of selling jobs, from 3 or 4 years on, but you would never find a man (except one old Chinese). So Martin became very famous. They called him Pastel-Pastel or Pastor Pastel (Pastel=cake).

But our members became ashamed of him. Because they wanted to belong to a rich organization with a big leader, they stopped greeting him on the street, like they had nothing to do with him.

One morning, I was still sitting in front of the house selling, I think it was 1998, a strange fear was in the air. Nobody would buy cake, nobody would talk to me, the air felt thick, too heavy to breathe.

After some time, military trucks would come, soldiers climbing down, pulling people out of their houses, driving them onto the trucks. I saw a man looking back, a soldier hitting him into his face. I asked people what was going on, nobody answered me.

Next day, our little Jonathan told me that the neighbor children told him, how it stinks so badly in the neighboring villages, because there were so many dead people and nobody buried them.

Later we found out, that Bubi-people, the original inhabitants of our island, living in the villages, usually very peaceful people, had attacked and killed 5 soldiers of the government tribe (Fang, a warrior people).

After that, the brother of the president had ordered the soldiers to go into the villages and do whatever they please with the inhabitants.

They must have been loading all Bubi-people onto the trucks, living in the city. What happened to them, I don't know. People don't talk about these things out of fear. I don't know, if those things were known by the world then.

The first President, who was voted into power in 1968 is said to have killed about 50.000 people, before he himself got executed by his nephew, the current President, in 1979. But even under the new President, many things happened.

One of the President's brothers, Armangol, seemed to be very brutal man. He was responsible for security. Any opposition was carefully watched, incarcerated, tortured or killed.

We had a very good med. Dr., a Guinean woman with family background of Liberia who spoke very good English. This woman had previously worked together with IRFF on certain health projects and she respected our organization very much. I could not understand why, one day, she told me, that she cannot treat us anymore, but she gave me the name of another young med. Dr. in the hospital, whom we should consult.

We found out later, that our first Dr.'s husband was in opposition to the government and both of them already had been imprisoned. In the meantime there were rumors of us being spies or something, so some people had to be very careful to be seen with us.

This young woman just finished her studies in Cuba and Spain, was actually from the same family background, also speaking English very well. But her office scared me. On the door hang a paper with a price list of amputations:

1 Finger - 2000 CFA

1 hand - 4000 CFA

1 arm - 6000 CFA

The same with the legs. I heard, that they would amputate without having narcotics. Sometimes one could hear people screaming.

This young Dr. would later become the director of the hospital. When I congratulated her, she said: "This is not a hospital". Only later I realized fully, what she was talking about. There were no real professionals, no materials.

Even Europe send a lot of necessary materials, but they would at best be sold in one of the many pharmacies or by private Dr.'s. Everybody tried to make a little money. One time, I needed dental treatment, so I asked for a dentist.

"Yes, there is". I was guided to an old man with very dirty fingernails, smelling tobacco. In this hospital, there were no one way injection needles, so I brought my own.

He had a big bottle of Novocain, gave me one injection, dunked the bloody needle back into the bottle, gave me another one and pulled my tooth. I heard, that he was not a real dentist, but that he had assisted in dentistry in Russia.

My Dr. told me to stay away from him, if I don't want to get aids. One time our Jonathan had been hit by a bicycle, crossing the street and got himself some bad wounds on the head and one ear. It needed to be stitched. At that time we had little money, so we went to the general hospital.

They gave him injections, telling me it to be narcotic, but when they were sowing, Jonathan screamed so badly from pain. I could hardly hold him, and he hit his head against the wall. The narcotics had at best been water, but I still had to pay for it.

Till the year 1999 Rev. Cho would come back a few times, trying to make friendships with government people and also trying to help finish Motoko school, a primary school, initiated by the parents of Motoko Shiroma, who was later declared a Martyr.

The Women's Federation sisters from Japan worked hard and always send money to finish this project. Under Rev. Cho's guidance also the church members helped with the construction till Motoko School officially was opened in 1999.

The land for Motoko School was given by the government. All around was still jungle, till bit by bit the area developed. Walking around in the neighborhood, Martin discovered 2 monuments that honored German soldiers from before World War I that had been stationed in Cameroon and had to flee after WW I.

They were totally overgrown by the jungle. We were very surprised, we had not known, Germans had been here. Later we heard, that German soldiers actually had started building streets and infrastructure in Malabo and the mainland and some houses were said to be built by Germans.

In the year 2000 we were looking to rent another house for our family, when we found another relict from olden days in the garden of an old house. It was turned on its back and someone had mixed cement in it, but I recognized it as the egg shaped sign, which marks a German embassy or consulate.

I kept it in my kitchen to cover an opening in the wall. It happened, that one day the German Ambassador from Cameroon, which also was responsible for Guinea, visited us and was so shocked, seeing the sign. He did not know, there had been a German consulate in the early 50ies.

Of course, it was declared property of the German government and later we had to return it. Germans correct always and everywhere.

On April 18th 2000 Mr. Nsimba decided to leave Malabo for good to live with his wife in Cameroon. It had been difficult for him in EG and he could not belief it possible to have a successful business in Malabo.

Also all Japanese sisters had gone back to Japan. There we were, all alone.

Rev. Cho knew, how we were quite incapable as leaders, so he asked us to do our best to keep the members. So far Mr. Nsimba had been leading the English school, which was in the name and under support of Women's Federation. He told us to just close the school. But we strongly felt, we should continue it. We raised the fees a little and put it in the name of IRFF, and did well without financial support.

But difficult times were coming. One nice morning, Deogracias, who acted as the 2nd country leader came with the Director General of the foreign ministry and we were asked to come to the round table for a meeting, one brother would translate.

We heard, that the government had dismissed Caritas, because its leader supposedly was involved in a recent coup de Etat attempt. Now they were looking for an NGO with a clean vest to get donations into the country. Deogracias was involved with med. donations, had a pharmacy and helped to set up other pharmacies.

The members had a lot of hope, riches coming to them, if the deal would work. IRFF should take the place of Caritas, it had a good name in EG. And we had been put in the position of director of IRFF.

The whole thing would not have become a problem, wouldn't there have been one condition. 15% of all incoming things would belong to the director general! I felt, this smells foul, so I called IRFF HQ in NY, if there is a way of doing it.

They explained, that only by giving it as a salary, through the books, this can be done. This is TP NGO and everything has to be correct. When I explained this to them, they got very angry and left. From this time on hell broke loose for us, especially for me, because I did the phone call.

Already before there had been some suspicious activities around IRFF. I never understood what was going on. One day I found a yellow folder with the title "IRFF" on the desk and Mr. Nsimba screamed at me, not to touch it.

But Martin and me had been put as director of IRFF by the New York office and could proof it. So, for the membership there was only one way, to get rid of us.

Complaints were written to Korea, to African HQ, to Spain. What exactly about, we did not know then, but once we had a meeting with all NM in Korea and with a determined voice, Rev. Cho told us, that from now on we would not receive the support money for the church anymore, instead it would go directly to the members. Also the members had received the permission to cosign all financial actions, so Martin would not be free anymore, to make any decisions about church money, nor could he do any transactions at the bank.

We found out, when Martin was told at the bank, that he needs signatures from certain people.

He would not be able to pay the church part of the rent for the house and private we had only just enough to pay our part. I remember once, Martin walking the long way to Deogracias house in the rain for a signature only to be refused.

At the end we had not paid for several month and we asked Rev. Cho for help. Finally he told Mr. Goto to send the money again to us. The members insisted, that we leave the house, so we went searching for our own place, but at the end Mr. Goto refused to pay the whole amount for the church center, fortunately, so we had to stay. Also with the Women's Federation Account we started to get problems. Japanese sisters would always send big amounts to support Motoko School, but this money was not available for many month.

The director of Women's Federation was a politician, not a church member. Her son was an important man in the SGBC Bank, a French bank. She insisted that we leave the Women's Federation money in that bank. Clearly, there was a lot of corruption going on.

I was the person responsible to take care, that the money would serve the right purpose and suggested, that we take another bank. I met with strong opposition in WF, but at the end we found a way to open another account, which I could more freely access.

The money would be available there about 1 week after sending it from Japan, not 3 or 4 month.

The Spanish church also must have heard horror stories about us, they started soon to help our members to receive visas to come to Spain. After getting to know some of them, the Spanish country leader send us one of the letters of our members and told us how they create difficulties to him.

Slowly some people started understanding, what had been going on. It had been painful, not to be trusted by our leaders, but it broke my heart, when our own children were influenced and started accusing us badly.

Once an image is in a child's heart, it is difficult to remove, whether it is correct or not. I was mostly the focus of all attacks, because I had to carry most responsibilities and make most decisions. Of course, without Martin I could not have done any of it. Also the children helped so much!

I came to understand, how TP and their family must have gone thru attacks a thousand times more terrible.

In guinea we needed to renew our visa every year. As missionaries we paid a lower price than regular people, who had to pay up to \$ 1000 per person. We never had problems so far but in 2000 they would not give us another visa, nobody told us why.

One evening I saw Christine fighting with some soldiers at the gate. "We are going to get your family" said the soldier "And you are not going to touch any of us, is that clear", Christine screamed at the drunken soldiers.

The neighborhood people were streaming together, because nobody ever dared to talk to soldiers like that, they could just kill you. But the man were too surprised and left.

Not long after, a group of soldiers came into our kitchen and told us to pack up, on Sunday they would put us on a boat. But where is here the bakery? One said to another, then they left. We still did not know what was going on. We asked many of our government friends, everybody pretended not to know anything and promised to find out.

Our members, when asked for a meeting to talk, promised to come, but stayed in the street and laughed about us. A while ago, when they still would come for Sunday service, one of them, Pablo, wanted to give the sermon that day. I sat in the front row. I did not understand Spanish but tried to support him, when Christine suddenly

whispered into my ear: "Do you know, what he is saying? He is only talking bad about us, make us look stupid to the members"

It was hopeless for us, there was no one on our side. We could not guide the members.

One of the members Rev. Cho had permitted, that he might live in the center to help us translating. He spoke a little English and we still could not understand Spanish, but very soon he became very disrespectful toward us.

In the evening for example he would sit in the church watching TV. When Martin had to clean the floor, he would never move, so Martin could not clean the spot. He would not help with anything anymore. He had girl visitors in his room, someone smoking cigarettes and looking the door. Because he was blessed, but did not start his family yet, in the beginning we believed him, when he told us, it to be his sister.

Also he would steal and sell many things like English books and gifts from Japan. When we told this to Deogracias and begged him, to remove him from the house he said, that this brother has the same right to stay than our family. We could not do nothing. Then very terrible things happened, that I cannot talk about and Deogracias finally allowed him to leave. When we talked to Rev. Cho about all that happened, he suggested that we leave the country, but that was not so easy, we had no money and also felt, that we have to overcome the situation and stay for 3 generations, like Father wanted us to.

Before I explained, how we decided to keep the English school going and actually became successful. It was a clean and friendly place the people liked to attend. One day, Deogracias came and told the students, that there is no more school or something like it.

When we still continued, one day, the teacher did not appear. When we called him, he said, he is coming, but he did not. When we went to talk with him, he admitted, Deogracias had forbidden him to teach. He lived in one of Deogracias houses and did not want to lose that place.

Looking for a new teacher, we found a young Cameroonian (Kamgang), who had been studying philosophy, but had no money to continue. I gave him the Divine Principle book to read and he was very amazed about the deep truth and wisdom.

He said, that this is exactly what he needs. His dream was, to become a University professor.

So he became our member. Soon he was blessed with a Cameroonian sister, a teacher. At first, he was a tremendous help to us. He would speak in the radio and teach in catholic schools about Family values (through the medium of aids-education. Just what we needed to do so badly!)

He became famous. The catholic nuns would often ask for him, because they appreciated the teachings so much.

At some point, Kamgang decided, that he wants to help the old members, which all had left, come back into the church. We also thought, he should try, not understanding, that Kamgang himself was not really stable. The result was, that he started looking at us with different eyes, he did not trust us anymore.

But before that, another story. Our son Paul had been giving English lessons already since a while. So many students came, that we had to create a second class and he was happy to earn himself some extra money. He absolutely wanted to go back to America, even I felt so strongly, he should wait another 2 years.

Even he was an intelligent boy, it had not been easy for him.

At some point, he went to a catholic girls-school, which in the last two years also had boys. It was led by nuns.

To me it seemed, that the director had very little experience with boys, not to speak of love. Teenage boys can be a little naughty. So one day Paul was punished, to do garden work on a Saturday. He was ordered to bring a machete to cut the lawn. Since he had never touched a machete, he could not do it, so he was given a small kitchen knife to do this work. He must have felt so humiliated. Anyway, he got thrown out of this school and had to attend a government school, which he finished, but having no decent certificate.

He had worked hard selling cake and teaching English, accumulating quite some money. Unfortunately, an Italian neighbor, a businessman, gave him an extra \$ 1000, so he enough to buy a ticket to America.

But before being able to leave, he needed to renew his American passport in Cameroon, because EG had no American embassy anymore. But in order to go there, he needed an exit visa from EG authorities. Usually this was no big deal, you pay a certain amount, and in a few day you would receive it. But this time, things were different. They told him, to come back next day, again next day, in the afternoon, in the morning.

Paul went twice a day for 14 days that way. Then he realized, that he will not get an exit visa or a free passage paper, because his passport had expired.

He started panicking and decided to leave the country illegally on a boat. Kamgang went with him, he knew how to do this. Mike Lamson, at that time our regional director and Cameroonian NM from America wanted to help him in Cameroon, so he would get his passport and his way around.

He picked him up from the harbor in a big fancy car and took care of him in his big, beautiful house. When it was time, to go back, it happened in the same way, he had to take an illegal boat. At the coastline in EG, they threw him over board, because they were not allowed to come close to the beach.

Paul had contracted himself a heavy malaria. In that condition he had to wade through a deep river and run through the forest. When he came home with Kamgang, 2 o clock night time, he was in a very bad condition, not only physically, but he showed a lot of anger toward Martin and me, we could hardly talk to him. At 8am, the police came and wanted to take Paul to the station.

We told them, that Paul is very sick and is not able to leave the bed. They promised me, that it will only take 5 minutes, Kamgang had to accompany him. They did not return. We waited, waited, till we found out, they had been imprisoned.

Paul was just 19 years old, for Kamgang maybe it was not such a trauma, he was nearly 30 and knew Africa. We brought them food and medicine, hoping, next day they would let them go. Nothing happened, one more day, maybe after 3 days, we were sure, but nothing. At some point, they promised, to let them out for the payment of CFA 500.000 = \$ 1000 for each, but Kamgang told us, not to do this, they would try this again and again.

Also for us it would be difficult, to pay this high amount, it was about all we had in the bank. Would I have known the development of this situation, I would have paid. I think, or at least now I know I should have and I am very sorry, I didn't. We still hoped, somebody would help. In Guinea, the Spanish or French embassies could represent us Germans, so we went for help to the Spanish embassy. They asked the police, what would be the accusation for Paul and they told them about a list of 10, beginning with spying, falsification of documents and other things I can't remember.

The embassy asked them to give this in writing, but of course, never received anything. They told us, that they can't do anything.

After that, the American embassy in Cameroon got into action. First they send a specialist for religious affairs – nothing. Another time, a human rights professional – nothing. At the end the ambassador himself involved, and after 4 weeks Paul was freed by him.

Paul hardly ever talked to us. Only through Kamgang we could give messages and food. Even after his release, he stayed distant. He had been a little difficult before, but now, it was heavy to bear.

He told us: Why can't you be like Mike Lamson! Mike was very respected by all the members, he seemed very successful, had nice cars and house and money and he was all members hope.

We on the other side were despised by all members, were poor and had nothing to show. Martin was no more than a beggar. When Mike came to visit us sometimes, he invited us into a restaurant, showed us movies and embraced everybody very much, every time. What I missed was, that he would try to guide us and the members the way of the principle.

We were so desperate for love but also I realized, no change without his guidance in spiritual things, to us and to the members.

One interesting thing, while in prison, Kamgang asked me, to bring him the book "Unification Thought". While he was reading, a young boy from Ghana looked over his shoulder and wanted to know more about this book.

Kamgang told him about our church and he promised to visit someday.

Indeed, after some time had passed, he met Paul on the street and Paul pointed our house to him. In the beginning I think his motivation to come was maybe to find somebody to help him, because he was in a miserable situation, but he ended up becoming a member.

While our Guinean members did not understand, why they should stay pure and after marriage stay with only one woman, he was strict and never fell into problems with girls. I was grateful for that.

Kamgang had still stayed in prison after Paul's release. After about 10 days the police told him, he is going on a boat back to Cameroon. Kamgang asked me for money, because, he told me, if inmates cannot pay, they get thrown into the ocean and drown. Then I could not believe it, but I know now, this is possible.

Kamgang also told me how in the prison cells man and woman were put together and police and soldiers would rape the women in front of everybody. I asked Kamgang, if Paul also had to watch such things, he said, that it is possible, but he often slept.

Paul was still very innocent and only now I understood, how terrible this place must have been for him, apart from having to sleep on the cement floor, not being able to wash properly or go to toilette freely.

BTW the person being mostly responsible for Paul's long incarceration, died soon after in a terrible car accident.

Cake

We, had been selling cake in small slices on the street. One day a little kid asked the children, if we couldn't also bake chocolate cake, which I tried and was very much favored. People on the street had asked me many times, to please prepare a wedding cake or birthday cake for them, which I declined, because I had no idea, how to make a decoration here in Africa, with all the heat, humidity and having many times no electricity to run a refrigerator. Always they would reply: I am sure you can do it.

One day Deogracias begged me, to prepare him a birthday cake. I told him the same thing, but he encouraged me to just bake a regular cake, prepare a paste of sugar, water, maybe a little egg white and food colorings and just write "Happy birthday" on top and maybe some flowers.

This sounded not so bad and I tried. This was my first whole cake. In the beginning, I sold very cheap, because I thought, that I am lacking professionalism. Paul told me, to raise the price, but I had no courage. So we just could survive, buy simple food, pay school money and rent for the house, really nothing more.

But I was proud to be able to take care of those things. One day, it was the 13th of August 2001, Martin found a memo from HQ in the internet, where Father encouraged us, from now on to give 1/3 of our income for public purpose as donation, 1/3 of it for the local church work, 1/3 for the nation and 1/3 for worldwide work.

Martin told me, na ja, that is nice and good for others, but of course, here in Africa we can't do that! It always angered me, when he tried to get out of the way of difficulties and I was convinced that, when Father asked us this kind of thing, it is possible. So I told him: Of course, we can do that!

"You really think so?" he asked. "Of course!" That moment I got really scared> I knew, we will not have enough to eat. So I begged God, to help me, because I could not reverse my word my words to Martin.

I got the idea, to pin a little paper with a picture of Jonathan and a simple birthday cake to the front gate. That paper stayed there for 2 or 3 days, before it disappeared. I had written on it: "We make cake".

In any case, in the first week after that, we had exactly 1/3 more income!

It meant also more work for me and I began earnestly researching how to cover the cakes with cream. In the cooler, that arrived as leftover of our shipment from America I found a few cream recipes in a half destroyed cooking book.

One of them consisted of egg white, water, sugar, vanilla and something, I didn't know and was called "White mountain topping". Eee.....- I thought, how can one eat that! But in my desperation, I had to try! The ingredient, I didn't know, I just left out.

With my small hand mixer I beat something together, almost stiff and I learned to really cover the cakes quite nicely, with the help of food coloring creating quite nice designs. In the beginning of course, I started with 1-3 cakes per week, taking all my attention, creating a fitting design, many times having difficulties, finding good ingredients, many times having no electricity bringing me into big trouble.

But once I had accepted a cake order, I had to finish it on time, whatever it would cost. One time I had to prepare a big wedding cake, when shortly before finishing, the lights went out. In my desperation, we asked the neighboring bank that had a generator, to let us beat up one cream. They allowed it once, then no more. Next time, we had to ask in a supermarket nearby, only once, they permitted.

So I was constantly on the edge of getting a heart attack, till we decided to buy our own generator, with the help of church money, because working was not possible without it. Also to continue the school, it became necessary.

We had to keep it in the court yard, creating terrible noise and exhaustion gases. The neighbors were not happy, but what could we do? Also for us it was not easy, because the kitchen had no windows with glass.

As I became more confident, more and more people came up the steps, begging me to prepare a cake. When my little hand mixer collapsed and could not be repaired anymore, Mike Lamson bought me a Kitchen Aid on a visit to Europe.

It was quite expensive, but made a better cream and made my work easier in Guinea, it was difficult to get the things I needed. In the beginning, they had cacao powder for my chocolate cake, but then no more.

At times, we had to bring it from Spain, if someone travelled. When after 2 years my Kitchen Aid gave up, we had a new one send from Spain. When a little wire loosened after a few weeks, we tried to find someone to put it back in place. "But I need to take the whole machine home" he told us and gave us his telephone #. We never saw the man or the machine again. The telephone # did not exist anymore.

A kindly friend of Deogracias borrowed me his machine, till I could buy a new one. At that time, we only had a gas oven for baking. Knowing, how often there is no gas available. I bought 4 gas bottles, so I would never run out.

But one time, for many, many weeks no gas could be bought. Finally also my bottles run out. I just finished the last cake, when the oven turned cold. The bell rang and a man wanted urgent buy a cake for the next day. I was already in vacation mood, since now I could not take any orders anymore. "Sorry, no more gas". I told him. "Oh, no problem" he said, "I work at the gas company and can organize one for you". He brought me a giant bottle that lasted exactly till the day, gas was back.

Many miracles occurred like that. Sometimes there were no eggs or flower in Malabo, but always someone would find some for me. People wanted my cakes so badly. At that time there was at least one professional cake bakery in Malabo, but people told me, that they preferred mine, but why? Was it, because I was cheaper, or was it because I always put a few drops of Holy Wine with a prayer into their cake or was it, because my cakes were always fresh and with the best quality available ingredients?

I loved, to look out the window after people picked up their order and mostly I saw their faces very happy.

Some people were depressed or even cried, if I wasn't able to take their order. Over time, I organized myself better, so I could prepare more. I had taken me a lot of time thinking every time a fitting design.

I started making photos of the finished cakes and created a booklet of different design, where people just needed to choose. Also we bought an electric oven.

But as business expanded, more unexpected problems came. One was that in some rooms' cracks in the ceiling opened up and would send specks of dust on my cakes. Another one were ants in all colors and sizes, some so small, you could hardly see them with the naked eye.

They all loved my cakes and would sometimes cover them within minutes. I started putting all shelves and table legs into water filled containers, so they were not able to reach the cakes, then they would use me, running up my body over the hands reach their goal.

Also some would run round and round my glasses to confuse me. One time, a bee came to visit me. I actually was very happy, because it reminded me on home. I never saw a real bee in Malabo. I talked to it and explained how happy I was to meet it and put a little bowl of cream for it on the table.

It visibly enjoyed. Next day, it brought a friend. A few days later, it brought a few thousand friends and there was no way to send them home. They would even stay overnight and it was impossible to decorate cakes in the kitchen.

I tried to work in another room, but they found a way to follow me. I could not work anymore and had to find a solution. I must say, I felt like a murderer, when I caught them with little bowls of cream and dunked them into a bucket of water, till not one was alive. Not one of them ever stung me, even they were all over me.

One year later, a little bee came, sat on my right hand (the one that killed) and stung, then another one came and stung me on the same hand. That was the last time, I ever saw a bee in Malabo. How intelligent and sensitive those innocent creatures are!

I must have become known also in the international community in Malabo, or was it, because we are generous, and Germans are very much respected, admired and trusted.

One day four Chinese man entered my kitchen, one stuck his head into a flower bag, another one laid flat on the ground looking underneath the gas oven, after inspecting everything and a few grunts, and they left without explanation.

A few years later, an old Chinese led a group of young ones into my kitchen. After inspecting everything, he asked me, how much I would sell such a cake. I told him and he said "too cheap"! They were looking to establish businesses and must have heard of my success.

Really shortly after, there were many Chinese cake bakeries, but the Guineans did not like them much. The stream of people climbing up our steps did not end. Even a few more professional cake bakeries opened up, people would first come to our door.

At times I had to reject hundreds of customers a week, because I just was overburdened, especially at times of Holy Days like Corpus Christi, Christmas etc. Corpus Christi was the big 1st Holy Communion day. But because Malabo had so many children, many Sundays thereafter were still celebrations.

Sometimes if I could not make a cake for a person, they would just postpone the festivities to another Sunday. One time I decided to escape to America because I felt too overburdened. I would be back in Malabo on Corpus Christi day.

How was I shocked, when instead of many hundreds of communion children filling our street down to the cathedral, there were at most 50 lonely boys and girls. I wonder.....

Thinking on Corpus Christi day, I remember one very sad happening. A couple of children stood in front of the door to pick up some cakes. Asking for the names, they told me this and this name, but one is dead and the other

one in the hospital.



Wanting to be really close to heaven, a group of first communion kids climbed the roof of an old warehouse, to make photos, right after they came from church. The roof collapsed and two children lost their life that day.

For many years the Catholic Church had been coming to me for all their cake needs, be it the archbishop's birthday, or any celebrations of the priests. TP picture had been hanging freely in our office, it seemed not to disturb them. But one day a very catholic woman of Liberian background reacted very upset when she saw it.

From that day for 2 years I received no more orders from the Catholic Church. Only after Father had passed away, was I asked to make the archbishop birthday cake again.



In one of the earlier years I got an order from the restaurant that the President used to receive his guests.

I was to prepare two cakes of about 1 sp. Meter, 1 for our president, 1 for the president of Sao Tome. For such occasions I would not make my regular cakes, but fine sponge cakes with buttercream. They turned out very beautiful, but from the cook I heard, that both presidents had not eaten of it.

Also from that day on I never was to make a cake for the president's restaurant again. But the cook and the owner continued to order for their children's birthdays.

When I asked the cook, what happened, he only smiled, and he was not allowed to talk. I will tell you, what happened. In our excitement we had written an email to the N.M. in Sao Tome "Today your president is going to receive Holy Wine. We made a cake for him".

Now I knew, that we were being observed, our email and our telephone probably too. But why?

Some surprising answers

In March 2004 there was another attempt to get rid of the president. This time a group of foreign mercenaries had been hired. A German supposedly flew into the country with his plane. There was a lot of unrest and tension.

Martin thought it wise to visit the police station, someone there had promised him to help him get a new residence card. This person had him sit on a chair for about 30 minutes and then took him away to lock him into prison, no explanation.

Many people had been imprisoned, so his room was very crowded with hardly any space to lay down. They were rarely allowed to go to the toilette. Some had their hands chained to the back and others had to help them to urinate into water bottles.

The prisoners would not receive any food, if they were lucky, someone would bring them some, and others had no one. I myself not, they would have locked me up to. Only the children, who needed no residence card yet, could bring him food.

One time Christine witnessed, how police hit a young prisoner so hard on the head that his skull seemed to have split. When the blood rushed on the floor, the guard screamed at him, not to make such a mess and to clean it up.

I heard, that during that one week 5 people had been carried out dead.

There were actually two prisons, one at the police station the other close to the hospital, called "Black Beach" One night, when Kamgang watched the news, he saw a report of a German having died at "Black Beach".

Fortunately I knew, that Martin was not at that place. Next day, my daughter got a phone call from Ghana, one of her friend's condoled her, because it went all over the country and beyond, that Pastel, Pastel had been killed, because he was the only German, people knew.

Also many people came to our door and expressed how they were so sorry. One child came and said, he was sorry that my husband is dead, but if he still can make a cake (people believed that Martin makes the cakes).

Martin himself had not been tortured and the inmates had treated him with compassion, letting him rest a lot, while they many times had to stand up, because there was no space. Still when he was released after a week, Martin was not in a good condition, his skin was wound everywhere and he emitted a stench, like I never, ever encountered.

I wanted to ask him to go to the prayer room first, but instead I pushed him into the bathroom, to get himself cleaned. He told me, how the director general of security approached him, if he did not know about the letter, that had been send to the police concerning himself.

Martin told him truthfully, that he does not know of such a letter, and asked about the contents. He received no answer, but was released. Much later, Kamgang found out, that the members had written this letter about 4 years ago and all had signed it. We suspect, that they told the police, that we were no missionaries, but spies.

This explained, why we received no more permit to stay in the country. From now on, after paying a fine of \$ 2000, we received residence cards again.

But before this there was another incident. Martin and I were taken from the market into a taxi by a police man and driven into the forest. The police man always grinned at me. He could have killed us, if not another police man would have watched the whole thing and driven behind us, but we did not know.

Finally he pulled over and told us to walk home. We never saw this man again, it seems that he had been removed from the city police force.

(Since Paul's imprisonment, foreign governments and human rights organizations have been watching Guinea more closely and published reports of H.R. violations. The president received many times disrespectful treatment at international meetings. So a lot of effort has been made to get a better name in the world, even allowing foreign government to give help in educating soldiers and police.)

After Martins release from prison believed to see a ghost when we went for a walk together, because everybody believed him dead. The majors told him, how much she had cried, when she heard of his death.

Once, when we were visiting a piece of land we had acquired outside the city, a man came running toward us, shaking Martin's hand and saying, " I am so sorry, that we have treated you so badly."

One might wonder, how it was possible for us to stay in a country like that without a permit, a country, with a dictatorial regime, strongly influenced by communism for the past four years.

I think, there were several reasons.

One was, that IRFF had a good name. Especially the school was very much wanted, already before our time. Also many government officials ordered our cakes and did not want to lose us. The other reason was, that our children were befriended with many of the children or grandchildren of the president or other officials.

There had been an order to all the embassies, if we travel out of the country, not to give us entrance visas again.

At first, we did not know this, but when I myself tried to get an exit visa, a police woman told me, please don't go they won't let you back in!

So, the police just tried, not to let us go out. One time, Martin was on his way to Korea, his luggage in the plane, when they took him to the police station, telling him, that he is not going to go.

Anyway, something interesting happened. At that time, we were still poor and we could not afford too many trips. He could not go this time, but 2 years later he was invited again to Korea. He was one of 30 people invited from Africa to receive a special Cheon Il Guk award.

He could actually finance his travel, only because last time he was stopped. How surprised I was, when he came home with very precious jewelry set given by T.P.

This time he had gotten permission to go out and someone helped him to come back in again for a little bribe. But travelling was and stayed a complicated issue.

Once, Martin had to go to a meeting and already bought the ticket, but after 2 weeks, he still had no confirmation, that he was allowed to leave. Every day he would go to the police only to receive the answer: "Your passport is on the chief's desk. His flight was next morning at 8am, still no passport. We went to talk to the police in the evening only to hear, come tomorrow at 9 am."

"But the flight is at 8 am", we replied. Ok, than come at 7 am, but the chief will not be here before 11 am. Desperately we contacted the travel agency, they talked with the chief. The chief came and broke open 2 desks of his secretaries and finally found the passport.

(Most likely, they had hoped that Martin would give them some bribe, but Martin never did this. But in Africa one has to learn this kind of custom, in order to get things done).

The police had to race him to the airport, not to miss the flight, of course, he had to pay for it. Even till the year 2013 there were always situations, where we never could be sure to receive permit to leave in time. For our children the situation was very different.

After Paul's incarceration there came an agreement of USA and EG, that US citizens are free to go in and out. Our children all have US citizenship by birth. How we regretted, that we did not get our US citizenship.

About Malaria

This was one of the most difficult things for me, to deal with Malaria. As I reported, in the beginning it hit me very hard and I was afraid, not to survive it to many times.

Also the children and Martin had been close to death. One time, quite in the beginning, we found Paul on the bed totally purple, it was so scary. Deogracias gave him some injection and eventually he recovered.

Over time, I learned to treat everybody myself with Artesunate and another medication, Fansidar, at the slightest suspicion of it being Malaria.

Because of the high fever there would be vomiting and I had to use tricks to keep the medication down. First, I would give them a fever ending medicine with some Coca-Cola. It worked good.

But sometimes I was not sure, it to be Malaria. Once I was very busy, so I send Martin with Matthias to the hospital for a blood test. Because we are white, and whites are always rich, they kept Matthias in the hospital, saying, that he was in bad condition. (Hospital care is expensive).

I was shocked, but could not do anything. I asked the Dr. to give him Artesunate, but he got angry and told me: "Who is here the Dr.?" After 3 days he was really sick and he would have died, if the Dr. would not have given him Artesunate then.

Now he needed a blood transfusion, but I did not know his blood type. Already people were in the room, offering to give blood. I was very scared, because almost everybody is infected with HIV or Hepatitis B.

They took his blood and told me, that he is of the blood group O+. This was strange, because Martin and I have A+. I did not give up begging them for a new test. With a bored voice they reported, "Well, this time it's A+.

Martin would give his blood. But still Matthias seemed to have infected himself with Hepatitis A through dirty equipment. He was very weak and hallucinated. Even after 2 weeks in the hospital he could not even hold up his head.

We had to carry him and I put him out laying in the sun. Slowly he gained strength. Also, Beatriz, a member of American-Indian decent, helped him a lot. In Matthias hospital room I met a young Guinean Dr., actually he was Dr. of biology but he cared a lot to help the young children.

We came to talk about malaria, how to terminate it. There had been many efforts of the world-health organization which I think make no sense at all. One was, that they would spray people's houses with an insecticide to kill mosquitos, but people reported, that all the chickens and even dogs died.

They came also to our house and I had a hard time to get rid of them when I told them, how dangerous this is for people too, they replied: "But it kills all your cockroaches." Also there was a big fuss about mosquito nets. They would distribute them to all households with young children.

They never came to us, so we asked in the hospital, where to buy them. We should ask in the Ministry of Health. On the ground floor they told us, to ask upstairs. There we found only sleepy people in the offices that told us, to come next week and ask again.

But mosquito nets and spraying would not at all prevent malaria, but it would give some income to some people.

So, this young Dr. and I began serious discussions. I asked him, if a certain kind of mosquito is the only way of transmitting malaria to people. He said, yes. How long would this malaria live? 3 weeks, he said. "Is there another being for example monkeys that can be infected with the same malaria?" He said no.

So we came to the conclusion, that, if all people living, coming in or out of the malaria belt of the earth get treated at the same time with artesunate, that mosquitos would not be able to get the infection from anybody anymore.

This would be possible and more reasonable than killing mosquitos. We would need maybe 1 year of educating people, setting up a distribution system etc.

It would be safe and sure, but required total cooperation. I asked him, if he would help me to bring this idea to the WHO, but he said "you can do it, by the way, there will be a vaccine available in two years." Unfortunately, till today there is no vaccine that works.

I realized, nobody there is really interested, to end malaria, it gives bread to many people, at least no one of the kind of people that would do something. Maybe they don't believe, it can be done either.

Unfortunately, now about 15 years later, artesunate is not always working anymore. In some countries malaria again mutated and people die, having no better medication.

I wish, I had more stubbornly pursued my idea then.

Martin has a relatively good Immunsystem. So, he would show sometimes signs of malaria, but next day he would be fine. So it went for a long time, not being sure if it really is malaria. So I send him to the hospital.

An old man would make a test without charging us, we were still poor then. It came out negative. Next day, the fever rose, so I send him back for a test. Again it showed negative. One day later, it got worse and we decided to see our Dr. at the hospital. As soon Martin sat down he lost consciousness, his eyes showed only white. The Dr. started hitting him into the face, trying to get him back, but nothing.

She got really scared, we would lose him. She thought, it was malaria. I let her know about the 2 previous tests. She screamed "what, that old man cannot even see anymore and his microscope is blind! Quickly, let me make another test at the lab.

Her suspicion was correct. "Quickly, to the hospital!" But I was afraid, to use the same place again, that treated Matthias.

"Ok, then let us bring him to a private clinic." But this was worse. Because of us being white (and rich) they not only treated him for malaria, but also for several other things, he did not have, one of them, typhoid fever. On top of it, they did not treat him with artesunate.

So when I was alone with him, I gave him his dose. By evening time, I was depleted of almost all my cash and decided, to get Martin out of there. I pulled him out of his bed into a taxi. On Dr. screamed after me: "You will see, tomorrow he is dead".

But I trusted in artesunate (and the help of God). At home, I tried to give him a bath, because the clinic had been dirty, when he lost consciousness again. Paul and I carried him to bed.

Only 1 ½ days later, Martin was selling cake on the street again.

I don't know, was it this time or another time, Martin was severely sick and hallucinating. He started talking to me in a very clear voice about what supposedly would happen after his death.

He told me, that they buried him on the mountain, but Korea was coming to get his body. For this, they would send a big military transporter flanked by 4 fighter jets. One from North Korea, one from Cuba, one from China and one from the Soviet Union. (He told me, otherwise they would not have allowed the South Korean plane to land) but now the soldiers at the airport could not do anything)

Out came a lot of soldiers with sunglasses and white gloves. Those soldiers were actually all ghosts, but nobody would see. They would place his body within a car inside the transporter and the children and I would be placed into another car.

For the children they had prepared entertainment for the long flight. Paul would receive a computer, but they said, he should not use it to much, otherwise he would have problems once he goes to spirit world. Christine received drawing materials and for Matthias and Jonathan there were little kids games.

I asked him, what about the house, I can't leave it alone. He said, that already 2 soldiers have been placed on the steps to take care. I asked him, what about, when we came, how can I manage without your help?

He said "Don't worry. The soldiers will give you a lot of money and there will be a Korean girl, 16 years old to help you. But she always hides behind the door because she is very shy in front of strangers, but she knows everything how to do, you don't need to teach her anything (I have problems, teaching) She is also a spirit".

"What about the money, is it for private or for public use?" I asked.

"It doesn't matter, you can use it for whatever you like, only not for the living offering donation, because it is spirit world money!"

He told me other things, I don't remember. One of them was, that True Mother wanted to visit Malabo, but Martin had told her, not to, because it would be too difficult for her.

Martin did not remember, telling me any of this. In real life, he has no ability to tell stories.

How could we survive financially? I always felt, giving donations is like a heavenly bank account. Since we felt, God send us there, we also trusted, He will show us a way. Father had made it clear, that we will not receive support from the church, so we never expected help from anybody.

We tried to live simple and only to spend money on imported things. Especially we were strict, not to use public money for our family, even nobody would have noticed. One time, some church money was stolen because of our own fault, we replaced it.

One time we left the house for a few weeks and had to hide Women's Federation money very carefully, so thieves would not find it. Also we forgot, where we hid it and Jonathan thru it out with the garbage when he cleaned the room, about \$ 800.

We replaced it with private money. I only want to say, we tried to be absolutely correct with public money. There was a time, when we were quite poor and it would have been scary for some people, but during such a time, we decide, to give 30% instead of 10% donation. Also a little earlier I received quite a chunk of money after my mother's death.

My first thought was, to buy some land or small house for our family, to have some property of our own finally. But I got the feeling, it was not right.

I never wanted to make big decisions without God, so I asked "What do you want me to do then?" I got the inspiration to open the magazine "Today's World" and found the sentence Take your family and go to Jardim". Of course, wasting such a big amount of money just to travel seemed not a good idea to me, so I thought, I must have opened the wrong page, let me open another one.

How shocked I was, when my eyes caught the same sentence (a little changed) on another page. I could not believe it, but we took this serious.

So we really travelled to South America with our whole family. The strange thing was, that the money would have been exactly enough, had I not made a mistake with exchanging, but at last it worked out.

Especially for the children it had been a great experience and having a picture together with TP is such a treasure. We never regretted.

This was in summer 99.

Now our bank account was empty again and we quickly started selling our little cakes on the street. Also people would come up again for whole cakes. But actually only after we had decided to give 30% donation, business took really off.

Of course, I had to develop my skills slowly, but constantly our income grew. Interestingly the growth rate of the income per capita in EG kept always close to our private income growth rate. In other words, also EG started seeing better times.

Soon EG was known as one of the richest countries in Africa. Of course, poverty persisted with many people, but opportunities opened up for many. Many foreign companies started to come in, oil companies from USA, England and many construction companies from China and even from Germany.

Even Eon-gas from Germany was there for some time, but they must have lost patience with the government and left.

Was Malabo a small sleepy town when we first came, over the years it became very lively and at certain times of the day, it reminded me on NY City, busy, busy.....

Every hole in a wall was used for some business. Especially Chinese occupied almost every 2nd store.

We never opened a bakery. I worked only out of our kitchen with normal kitchen equipment. So we could keep overhead costs low. Also the government could not create too many problems in terms of high taxes. If they came looking for the bakery, they would not find much.

We had no employees in the house, because it was very difficult for me to educate and be patient with people. Also I worked best alone without anybody around me to distract me.

In one way I was sorry, that I never taught anybody, because many people had asked me. I always thought, someday I will find a way. Unfortunately I never was good at teaching anybody.

When we came to Africa, we never dreamt of ever being able to travel again. We were firmly determent, to get our Total Living Offering donation together and finished it in 2003.

In the meantime we had been in Korea and Martin had visited many other places. There was always money to go to important meetings. Also the children had been often in Cheoung Pyeong, and we could even liberate all our ancestors. On top of it we could contribute to the building of important places like the palace, the temple and the stadium.

There was just always money. African HQ started asking us sometimes for higher contributions than other nations, but it did not hurt us. Some people asked: How is this possible?

When we came to Germany, I heard Camberg was still not finished and Mother had to give help. I thought: How is this possible? Many members could not liberate their ancestors or could not visit Korea. How was this possible?

In America I heard similar stories. Had we bought a house in the olden days, and only cared about our own security and wellbeing, we could have missed out on many adventures and who knows, maybe we would be on welfare today.

Of course, it was sometimes hard in the beginning, especially for the children. We had to work very hard, everybody was involved and helped in some ways. In total we had sold 35-40.000 cakes big and smaller ones.

About the many nuisances common to Africa

1. Water

When we first came, there was still sufficient water most of the time. Out of the faucet of course only 1 or 2 hours a day we had this blessing, but in the rain season, always sufficient was given to us right from heaven.

As time advanced, many people would move to Malabo and there was less available of this precious good. At the same time also industry developed and even the rain god could only send us badly contaminated liquids.

Out of the faucet or direct from the sky, sometimes it was black with an oily film on top. Often we found worms in it, sometimes even toilette paper. We heard, that when some people build new houses, they connected their waste water to the fresh water pipes.

This was an accepted reality. The president had hired some German company to fix everything. We found a man of Indian decent, speaking German. I think he had only 2 or 3 people working with him and of course, he could not do anything and left soon.

Maybe a few years, planes coming from China spit out what seemed to be thousands of little blue man, they would be put to work to make everything new.

One would wake up in the morning and the whole street was a construction site. They worked with an incredible speed, only taking a short cigarette break and putting their skinny and sweaty bodies back to labor.

I have never seen any people working like it is to save their lives. The president of EG must have been very impressed by this and he wanted them to teach his Guinean youth.

So, one day we saw black young men standing in the ditches and the Chinese firing them on, dig, dig, dig... I don't think, more than 1 day, they all must have run away, the EG people I mean. In any case, the Chinese worked for many years to renew and expand the pipe system, but nothing changed for us till the day we left.

In those 16 years, how often had Martin and the children to carry water from far away, if they could get any. Well to do people everywhere would have their own wells dug, which was very expensive. Poor people send their children and women out in search of water like ever before and this in the capital city of one of the richest countries in Africa.

Of course, most of the time we would receive some for at least 1 hour. We got used to the situation and always tried to keep some reserves. Sometimes we used the same water 3 or 4 times before we flushed the toilette with it.

Electricity

Was another one of those unreliable factors in our life. Sometimes it suddenly turned off because of accidents like relay stations exploded or cables burned, sometimes the government turned it off for other reasons, for example, if there was political unrest.

How often the city was pitch dark in the night! How often peoples frozen goods spoiled, because there was no electricity for weeks at a time.

Necessary goods were not available

People had stopped farming on our Island after the Spanish left. Goods could be obtained cheaply from Europe, often subsidized by European governments, why should they work? Unfortunately it happened often recently, that ships could not unload their goods, because the president wanted first industrial goods to be unloaded like cement, or simply because of political tensions.

So many times we had no flour, eggs or fresh fruits and vegetables, even fish was mostly imported. Sometimes they had spoiled while waiting many weeks. But alcohol like beer would never run out, for sure. Other goods that came from Cameroon or Nigeria many times did not arrive, boats sank a lot because of overloading and some airplanes crashed for the same reasons.

Also recently, small boats with fresh produce from Cameroon were send back because of political tensions.

Specialist for anything were hardly available

When I saw the first 4 or 5 story houses being build, I pledged, never to enter one of them. Only magic could keep them standing for a while. Just about everybody could proclaim himself an architect or construction engineer.

For example, after 3 month instruction by another so called pharmacist, one could head a pharmacy, where I saw even operations being performed like sowing a big wound on the head or cutting open infected fingers.

Twice I had teeth pulled by dentists who never visited any medical school. One of them even did a good job, but very soon he must have switched to another profession, because he was not available as dentist anymore.

The school system worked similar. Just about anybody could establish a school to have some income. School always had to be paid for and there was no common standard.

In order to save money, they would often employ just about anybody as a teacher. Knowledge was not really required. In later years the government made some changes, the director of any school had to have at least a kindergarten teacher's certificate.

Even at university it wasn't much different. Once we employed a young American women as teacher in our English school. Here it was enough just to pronounce good English, because there were instruction books. Maybe she finished high school and started a nursing education, but never finished. Soon she was university professor.

Only the cath. Schools had some professionals, mostly from Spain, but like everywhere else, most of them could not afford books for the students, also they had to take some local teachers with little or no education (Our Jonathan had been one of them for a while).

Concerning construction, in the last few years bigger, more capable companies came into the country from China, Germany and other nations. Also several countries helped to educate police and military, like Israel, France and I think the USA, which lead to a decrease of human rights violations.

It seems like soldiers now were paid, they were not so skinny anymore and behaved better. Human rights organizations would regularly inspect the prisons. Result: the prisons now had TV and comfortable mattresses!?!

Still it was a gamble, if one needed a plumber, electrician or someone to fix the roof. Once I was looking for a good painter to paint the inside of the house. A friend of a friend supposedly studied painting at university very good, for sure!

After he finished the job my only consolation was our 16 year old Christine. She truly did a great job!

After some electrician had died being electrocuted, the government send a few young men to other countries to study the job. I guess, it will take a while, till Guinea is close to a European standard.

In the meantime, the neon lights on the ceiling are all pointing in different directions and the plugs in the wall look like crooked eyes, each one looking in a different direction, if they are still in the wall, that is.

Bye the way, the hole in the roof, that had been fixed many times, kept providing us with water in the rainstorm. I am talking about 100-200 liter in one go!

Another thing hard to deal with for a German housewife was the dust in the dry season. Many of our windows had no glass and needed to be kept open during the day for light and air.

It was very frustrating when 10 minutes after cleaning everything was covered thickly again. The rain season would create other problems. Weather changes could be very sudden and before we were able to close the windows, everything was wet.

Apart from this, the high humidity in the air would bring mold and fungus everywhere. There was a strange phenomenon. If you would not wear a pair of shoes for a year, there was a big possibility that the soles would disintegrate.

After a few steps, they would just crumble away. Or the glue disappear and the soles would fall off. It did not make sense, to store away things, you would never know, if you ever could use them again.

So I understand, why African people have not the concept of saving, like we have.

About the English school

We have to be grateful for Annegret and other missionaries who laid a solid foundation for our afternoon English school for adults. Annegret used to teach Divine Principle along with English, but we could not continue that, because we had no DP teacher. Also she had run a sowing class, which we dropped over time.

The school had become well known in the country and many people that are now in higher positions, have attended here.

We are glad, we never closed the school. Even we had to raise tuition, it became more and more attractive. One reason was, American oil companies moved in and young people were hoping for a job with them.

Others simply wanted to study in foreign countries and needed some basic English. Some young people just came to socialize, there were also sometimes members of president's family or police, maybe to check us out or to learn English, who knows.

We always treated the school as a service project, not mainly as a moneymaker, that is the only reason we could succeed. We tried to treat all with respect and love, kept the room clean and friendly, always kept drinking water available and cake to buy.

Sometimes there was free cake for everybody, which they very much enjoyed. The school room also was the church on Sundays, so TP picture kept smiling down on the students. Some might feel it risky to have so many people running around the house with our private rooms open, very rarely something got stolen.

Even everybody could see the big drawer full of money in the back of the office, never anybody intruded.

I was only sorry, that we could not teach more professionally. The teachers we hired, where not professional teachers and sometimes their pronunciation was not so good. When later our children took over most of the teaching, one can imagine, things were not perfect, even so their pronunciation was good. But our students trusted them, especially, because they are Americans.

Many people would every day come up the steps to ask for admission. Many times we had to discourage them, because we realized, they would not ketch up. At matriculation time our 2 first level classes were quickly filled up. Once we allowed 75 people into the classroom, but it became too tight and later we admitted no more than 40-45 people into one class. Unfortunately about 2/3 would over time drop out.

I was sorry for that, because for many of them the matriculation fee and the monthly fees were high. But in general people never complaint.

Through this school we had an interesting encounter with North Korea. Over the time of about 6 month a man of the North Korean embassy kept visiting us and looking around our school several times. He was looking for a place to study English for his 2 daughters, but seemed not to be sure. When he finally brought his children they seemed to be extremely frightened.

It was decided that they attend the classes, but later they asked for private classes with Matthias. At that time we also had an American lady teaching, but the North Korean embassy had found out, that she frequently visits the new American embassy and did not want the girls to have contact to her.

So Matthias became their teacher. Even they were about the same age as Matthias, they treated him very respectfully and called him "teacher". They worked very hard and quickly progressed. Once, I overheard them saying: "But teacher, you forgot to give us homework".

In the beginning, they were very frightened and shy, over time they trusted Matthias and told him many things. They also said, that they know about TP, but this is not a problem. Their Father always picked them up by car and he greeted us friendly. But when other people from North Korea visited he never showed, that he knew us.

I think fondly about those girls, so pure hearted and beautiful and hope for a quick reunification of Korea not only for N.K. sake but also for South Korea.

In any case, our school was well known all through the country. When a Japanese film crew came to make a report about E.G., our school also received mentioning in the reportage on public TV in Japan.

I deeply regret, that we had to leave and could not continue. There was much potential in this school to truly become a blessing for E.G. At a school end party I begged the students, not to waste their life running after money. After that 2 of them came up to me and wanted to know more about our philosophy. I hope and pray that God can continue to work with them.

About our efforts to witness

After all, we felt, it was our first responsibility, to raise the moral standard of the people, to let them know about TP and the newly revealed truth in order to bring their lives into order and have them attract a better fortune. As money started coming into the country, things got worse. Anything would be ok, if it just would bring money.

I heard, some mother's would send their daughters for prostitution, even at a young age of 8 or 9 years. At the beginning around our house we watched cars cruising, picking up young girls. Sometimes they would have a baby, just putting it into the hands of one of the other girls waiting.

Later this kind of activity was mainly around big fancy hotels where foreigners would congregate.

Even so, it is quite normal in Africa, for a man to have several wives, even in a catholic country like E.G., still they have had strict family traditions. There was a certain order and respect in their relationships.

But with the arrival of the American spirit, they lost even that. There were no more taboos. Whatever would bring money, was ok.

In the beginning, Rev. Cho., Mr. Nsimba, Martin, Japanese sisters, and some members would go from house to house to teach True Family Values and prepare people for the blessing. Many would attend, but when everybody left, we were unable to take care of these people.



In 2007



I don't know, if ever anybody really understood, what had been thought to them. We started printing True Father's speeches about True Family values and distributing them to all our customers and students.

We did this over several years, but never had any response, till we realized, that most people cannot read or just cannot understand, what they read.

But finally, one young woman, one of our cake customers became very excited about Fathers speech. It was a tremendous revelation to her. She even agreed, to read one of Fathers speeches at a public event.

Unfortunately so far we had never been able to teach her more about TP or give her the blessing.

We were really quite incompetent teaching and relating to people and wished so much, to find someone for this job! Kamgangs work in schools and with the media seemed quite promising and very necessary, but slowly he started distrusting us and turned from us.

With a little more money and love we might have been able to keep him.

In 2005 we brought a brother from Cameroon, Cosmas, over to EG, in 2008 another brother, Francois. Both relationships did not last long. They already started their family life and they must have expected much more financial support.



True Mother's speech 2006 in Cameroon with the delegation from EG

(The person on the right a WFP member, myself, Roberto Martin Prieto [Publisher of "La Gazeta"] and next to him Kamgang. The rest are Cameroonian members