

The Heart of a Pioneer Missionary - Part 2

Paul Werner
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Visiting Schönbrunn Palace (Vienna, Austria) 1965

I witnessed to people wherever I went. After I talked to a gas station attendant, who filled up my car, just for a few minutes, he was fascinated by my words and invited me to his house for Sunday afternoon. When I arrived, three generations of his family were present, and I began to talk about the mission of Jesus. Sometimes, when one of them objected to my unorthodox presentation, the other family members would come to my defense. I taught this family with such great joy, and before I left, grandmother packed up some cake for me. She had noticed, that I enjoyed it very much in the afternoon. For days I had enough applestrudel, a specialty in Austria. We had several meetings afterwards and I'll never forget this home church of 20 years ago.

For the first year in Vienna I worked in a bookstore in Johannesgasse [Street]. Usually I began my day in St. Stephen's Cathedral with Heavenly Father. When I walked in there, I was so conscious of my being the son of God and the only one who could bring salvation to this nation by proclaiming Father's message. It was such a beautiful cathedral with a huge pipe organ, and many times I was overwhelmed by the music when I walked in. I sat down and prayed, deeply connected with Heavenly Father and spirit world. During those years I prayed all the time, even while selling books, and customers in the store noticed a difference about me but couldn't really pinpoint what it was. I served many aristocrats, who came in regularly, and one day a countess asked me: "Mr. Werner, what are you doing in here? You don't belong here; who are you?"

Usually all the sales personnel had their breaks together in a storage room in the back. One day our cleaning lady joined us for lunch. She was a rather shy old lady and usually didn't talk very much. But on this particular day she took all her courage together and said, "Mr. Werner, I dreamt about you last night, in fact, it was not really a dream, it was more like a vision." The other staff members were anxious to hear more, but she was so bashful and didn't want to talk. Finally, tears running down her face, she continued: "I saw a green pasture with many beautiful flowers, surrounded by trees. On the other side of the pasture I saw a person standing there. I was magnetically drawn to this person by the power of his love, and I knew it was God. As I came closer, I bowed my head, because I didn't dare to look at him, but when I finally stood in front of him and looked at his face, it was Mr. Werner." The employees, listening to her story, were deeply touched and didn't know what to say. The old lady herself was crying and still vibrating from her experience, but couldn't understand why she saw me in such a position. On this foundation I was able to convey more and more of the Divine Principle, and Father, and my mission here, to her and the others. One of the salesgirls later joined the movement.

Around noon, whenever possible, I went around the corner into a nearby church—Vienna has many beautiful churches—sat down and just prayed for half an hour. I had such a longing to be alone to talk to my Heavenly Father. I know I brought many spirits with me back to the store, and one day, as we all met again for coffee in the back room, a strange phenomenon happened. A long ladder, about 12-14 feet, was leaning against a bookcase, on an angle. We usually used it to reach the books on the higher shelves. Suddenly it moved away from the wall by itself and stood up straight. Everyone got the creeps and looked at each other quite puzzled. Then slowly the ladder moved back against the wall. For me it was clearly a manifestation of spirit world. Sometimes books moved around on the shelves and strange noises could be heard. Some employees really got frightened and didn't know what to think. They looked at me as someone very unusual with powers beyond their comprehension. In reality I just prayed a lot and spirit world responded. I also fasted many, many times.



Paul Werner with members in Austria (1960s)

I especially remember one seven-day fast. On the fifth and sixth day I was really hungry and quite tempted by the beautiful displays of food in the store windows. It seemed like everyone was cooking when I walked through the streets, to bother me with the scent of a warm meal. On the seventh day I was really ready to eat, and before my time was up, I bought some specialties I really liked, and set up a beautiful table. At that time, I was still all by myself. I had worked myself up psychologically and my stomach already hurt before I came to the table. After I offered my condition to God in prayer I was ready to really enjoy the food. I took about 2 mouthfuls and got sick, really sick. For the next few days I couldn't look at any food, much less eat it. This experience taught me a lesson I never forgot.

A short time later I sat by the Danube River and watched the water flowing by for hours and hours. It reminded me of people's lives here on earth. They are born and die and then the next generation comes, and the cycle repeats itself. Every river eventually ends up in an ocean, but who counts the drops of water forming the river? Some of them are hit by objects floating in the river, some get dirty when a ship stirs up the bottom. They all have to follow the countless river bends and windings through the mountains and valleys. That is what life is all about. Some people consider themselves very important on this earth, but unless they created eternal values, they are not important any more once they die. Life is a struggle for everyone on our way to this big ocean, spirit world. I was still young then, pondering the question of the purpose of life, and the river was like a revelation to me.

I was on the go all the time and one afternoon I visited Pauline, the social worker who helped me find a room. She was the assistant to one of the ministers in the Calvinist church. I had taught her the Principle content many times before, and when I got there on that particular day, I found her in bed, very ill. Another lady was at her bedside, constantly changing the compresses on her forehead to get the fever down. This lady asked me to keep an eye on Pauline while she was trying to grab a bite to eat, since she hadn't eaten all day. I was happy to be of help and sat at Pauline's bedside, holding her hand and changing the compresses a few times while talking about the Principle. I could feel the fever leaving her gradually, and when her nurse came back an hour later, Pauline and I were sitting on the edge of the bed, playing the guitar and singing together. The nurse shook her head in disbelief, but the sick girl was well. It seemed like a miracle, but all I did was just hold her hand, giving out love and compassion, praying for

her health. Both of them were amazed and I had the best opportunity to testify to Father and the Principle.



Early Austrian church members around 1967; Gerhard and Waltraud Wurm are seated front left and front right; seated next to Waltraud is Paul Werner's wife, Christel

Often I had appointments with contacts, and I remember one evening when I was supposed to meet a girl at a certain time. I sat in front of her house in my VW-bus for 7 hours, waiting and hoping she might show up any minute. I had prepared myself in prayer to pour out Father's love to her and draw her into the family. But late at night she came home with someone else and I didn't even have a chance to talk to her. Many times I sat in my van, praying and waiting for people, and many times I was disappointed. More and more I could understand how Heavenly Father felt, being disappointed by mankind. For days, weeks, and months I walked the streets of Vienna and talked to many, many people. Every day I started out with new enthusiasm and a song on my lips, even though I felt very lonesome. Many times after I talked to people, giving them new hope, I went around the corner or back into my VW-bus, lay down on the platform and cried for a long time, but when I approached people again, they only saw a happy face. Through an intensive prayer life, I developed much spiritual power, drawing people like a magnet, to listen to the message I wanted to convey.

Once I talked to a Methodist minister very intensely about the Principle, after his sermon. He was deeply touched in his heart but wouldn't allow himself to accept the truth. He said to me, "Mr. Werner, when I attended a Methodist seminary in Frankfurt, Germany, they took the Bible apart and I almost lost my faith in Jesus. I couldn't do anything else but cling to the cross, and that's why I'm still alive, while many others left the ministry. Now you come with such a powerful message and I feel like I'm losing ground again. Your words are very plausible, but I did it once and I have to do it again. I'm clinging to the cross and am afraid to let go of it."

The next day he fell and broke his ankle while walking down the street and had to be in a cast for six weeks. Now he had ample time to listen to the Principle, and we spent many blessed hours together. But finally he rejected the Principle, and rejected me too.

Children's Day 1965 I celebrated by myself in the Vienna Woods. I spread out a towel on the leaves of the ground and placed my little picture of Father on this altar. I then made my three bows, knelt down and talked to my Heavenly Father. It was so beautiful, sharing with God and True Parents in these peaceful surroundings. I felt so much joy and gratitude in my heart and will never forget this experience.

Spirit world led me in so many ways. Once I wanted to meet a certain person I hadn't seen for a few days and I didn't know where to start looking for him. As I sat in St. Stephen's Cathedral pondering this question, spirit world told me exactly what street I should walk down and at what spot to wait for him, as he would be driving by in his car. I jumped up, followed the instructions and waited for him. Sure enough, he came driving by. I stepped into his car and we had a good talk about the Principle.

Many times I was deeply saddened when I walked into the cathedral. On the right side of the entrance many, many people lit candles and knelt in prayer in front of an altar for Mary. I found a crowd of people there at all hours of the day. In contrast, just two or three people were sitting in front of Jesus' altar on the left. Everybody else worshipped Mary and disregarded Jesus. I really could feel his disappointment and was deeply saddened in my heart.

I frequently visited churches, especially the Calvinist Church, and made friends with the organist, Gerhard Wurm and his wife Waltraud, a teacher of religion. They invited me to their home and I taught the Principle until late at night—or, rather, early the next morning—day in and day out. They were deeply moved by the power of God. They were special people with a solid Christian background and very active for Jesus.

I knew God wanted them at this particular time in the dispensation, and I paid much indemnity to assist them in their decisive battle. When I came home to my icy room above the chicken coop in the early morning hours, I lit my candle on the altar, knelt down and fought a fierce battle in prayer, mobilizing spirit world to assist me in leading this young couple to Father. They had a two-year old daughter and he had a degree in engineering. I knew, once I succeeded in winning them for True Parents, many new avenues would open up.

I therefore invested all the love and spiritual power I had, until they were so moved in their hearts, that they accepted True Parents and the Divine Principle, in December 1965. Full of enthusiasm they invited their friends, most of them teachers of religion, and I taught the Principle with much authority and power every day. It was the most wonderful Home Church experience I ever had. Since all of them came from a very active Christian background, they had the best chance to accept True Parents and the Divine Principle, and the Christian spirit world really participated. It wasn't easy though to convince them about God's new dispensation, and time and again I had to drive out Satan trying to influence these precious people called by God. Again I fasted and prayed as much as I could, and it was a constant battle between the good and the evil forces. Usually after my lectures I drove each one of them home in my VW-bus. Since they lived in different parts of the city, it took a few hours to get them to their destinations and this gave me more time to talk to them about True Parents and the Principle. When I finally came to my room in the early morning hours, I prayed desperately, that they might understand the truth and would be protected until our next meeting. This constant and deep involvement in the mission is the most rewarding experience.

Once I talked to one of my early members for a few hours, teaching her the Principle and the atmosphere was really high. Afterwards I asked her: "Did you understand everything?"

Her answer was: "No, I just know that everything you said is true and I accept it. I feel you are a man of God."

She was so deeply touched in her heart by God's love and spiritual power, flowing through me when I witnessed to her, that she was convinced that God was calling her and all she could do was follow.