

A Pearl Of Great Price -- Testimony Of An African Missionary To Uganda - Part 5

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We celebrated Parents' Day, as usual, with the German missionary brother, one native member, and I. That same night, long-range shells were fired from Tanzania; their target was Kampala.^[1] Shells over one meter in size flew in from a distance like missiles and exploded. Tremendous vibrations were felt throughout the city. The three of us started to pray desperately. We felt as if it would be the last day of our physical lives; we prepared to go to the spirit world. Only tears of repentance welled up in my eyes. I felt I had accomplished nothing and that I was not qualified to go to the spirit world. I felt so sorry in front of Heavenly Father and True Parents. Unknown to the rest of the country, this was Parents' Day. It was the day when the war developed into a full-scale battle; many foreigners fled the country.

A 6:00 p.m. curfew forced us to stay in the center. The new center did not have tap water; this forced us to draw water from a well and store it in cans. We devised elaborate plans for every use of water: washing dishes, using the toilet, doing laundry, taking showers, etc. Before Parents' Day, we made up a huge batch of kimchi. This turned out to be our good fortune because it was our only vegetable during the war. We ate it with dried food.

We were so tense every day. Late one night, the army pushed its way into our apartment in search of guerrillas. I looked out of the window and saw warplanes and anti-aircraft guns. Tanks passed by constantly. I always had the feeling that the next shell would come to us. At night soldiers came into our yard and started shooting each other.

Because we lived under this constant pressure, the German brother and I prayed together and studied together as much as possible. I remember one day in particular when I stubbornly refused to listen to him. He cried. His next words pierced my soul. "If we do not make unity, we might die." We were on the borderline of life and death. I had acted self-centeredly. I realized my fallen nature and cried to God desperately to be able to change. The three of us then persevered through the war under the warm and embracing leadership of my German brother.

Our center inhabited a hill in Kampala; unfortunately, it was the same one that housed the army headquarters. Our neighborhood became the final battleground of the war.

Yet in the midst of this, I received a telephone call from Japan. (At that time, we could not make outgoing calls, but could only receive them.) What a surprise! I heard the voice of my wife for the first time in four years. The only thing I could tell her was that I was all right and that it was impossible to leave Kampala, so I had made up my mind to stay there. I sensed her inner anguish, but I could not do or say anything else of any comfort.

One day around 1:30 a.m. there was a phone call directly from the world missions director in New York. He spoke to me in Japanese and suggested that we all try to go to Kenya. Even during that conversation, shells were falling around the center. Actually, it was impossible to escape Kampala, yet I made myself ready to faithfully follow whatever the world missions director might instruct us. It was difficult for anyone to go but literally impossible for Ugandans to cross the border. My German brother and I could only look at our native member and cry. The world missions director told us that we should pray deeply and act with absolute faith in God.

The same night of that phone call, I had a spiritual battle. A huge black man came beside my mattress and tried to kill me. I was overwhelmed by his spiritual power; I knew he wanted to kill me. All my strength was completely drained away. I knew that if I continued to fight against him with absolutely no strength, I would die, but I could not do anything at all. After persevering for about 40 minutes, I felt strength grow within me. Finally, I managed to push him away. He ran and I ran after him. When I caught him, he turned out to be a beautiful woman. I pushed her away. After this, our world missions director appeared and smiled at me. From this experience, I could understand a little of Jacob's battle against the angel at the Ford of Jabbok.



Later that same night, more fighting broke out. The three of us woke up, and we could do nothing but go to the prayer room and pray desperately. The battle was so gruesome we thought we might die. The regular army was making a last attempt to defend its headquarters.^[2] Fortunately, the peak of the battle was over by morning. Immediately, we started to pack our bags, following the instructions from our world missions director. The next flight out of the country was not for three days. We felt that we simply could not go back to our center, so we prepared to move to a house in the section of town in which the embassy personnel lived.

I wondered about my fate. It was risky to leave; we did not know what would happen. It was as if my life flashed before my mind. I felt sorry for myself and did not feel worthy to go to the spirit world. My heart filled with the feeling that I was a real son of Father. I had compassion on Heavenly Father who had to watch such miserable people as us. I felt sorry for my wife. I went to the prayer room and collapsed in tears. I could only pray, "I am Your true son. And here I am now." An indescribable calm came over me.

At about 6:00 p.m. I heard noisy voices outside the apartment. Then my German brother and our member rushed into the prayer room shouting, "Kampala has been liberated." All three of us jumped up and embraced each other. We slept peacefully for the first time that night. The three of us shared our feelings of gratitude that we could share these most trying experiences with the people of this nation.

After not seeing any of my friends for a long time, I met two of them on the hill where our center was located. It was a joyous reunion. I took many long walks during the next weeks. When I walked around the devastated city alone, I could not stop crying. After the war people went through the stores and looted them. All the shops were empty. Our office was completely burned. The skyline of the city showed wisps of smoke from many burned buildings. Dead bodies were left lying where they fell.

Kampala had to begin again. Until the war, we had so many good contacts with shop owners. It was as if that was our home church work. Yet, because of the racial conflict, they left Uganda. When I walked around the devastated city of Kampala, I deeply understood how the prophets cried upon seeing the devastated city of Jerusalem. I prayed with tears, asking Heavenly Father how this country could receive His blessing and prosper again.

Ugandans are incredible people. They lost everything in the war. Yet after a few months, stores and offices opened again. I have great admiration for their vitality and determination.

My heart was filled when I thought Uganda could gain true freedom and people could once again be happy. I wondered how it was possible that man was treated like a small insect. Life was so easily crushed. I could not stop crying. I thought deeply about how we had to teach the people of Uganda about the value of a human being.

Meanwhile, I received a letter from my spiritual father. He mentioned that he had recently been matched. It was the first time a Japanese man had been matched to a black sister. He said that it had always been in his mind that I was working hard in Africa, and he wanted to accept matching with a black sister; in this way, he hoped that he could assist our mission. I realized that we were devoting ourselves to restoring the world. Father is undertaking the entire burden, and each of us in our respective missions helps him to the degree we can.

I reapplied for a work permit again and again. I met the minister of internal affairs three more times. Yet, I was not permitted to stay in Uganda any longer. I had to leave my beloved mission country.

After my experience in Uganda, I deeply realized how the way of restoration through indemnity was strict. I could not go into victory through indemnity with simply conceptual faith. Through living together with other missionaries and native members, the hidden problems of my faith and personality were clearly revealed. I had no way to avoid them; I had to face them squarely and deal with them. By doing so, I believe that my faith and personality strengthened.

Even though we had some conflicts with each other because of the differences in language, customs, manners and cultures, I realized that we were brothers under the same True Parents and have the same heart.

[\[1\]](#) This is the Uganda-Tanzania War of 1978-79, known as the Liberation War in Uganda. It led to the overthrow of President Idi Amin.

[\[2\]](#) Possibly the (final) April 10 attack on Kampala by combined Tanzanian forces and the Ugandan National Liberation Front