

## Everyone in North Africa lives in sort of a communal fashion

Out Unification Church Missionary in North Africa

July 1976

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Everyone here lives in sort of a communal fashion, so one small room may house 5-8 people, who all share the rent. But for us we are only three. I know when I was thinking about coming here, I thought that everything would be so much cheaper here than in the U.S., but just the opposite is true. The food is incredible, the rent is outrageous; there is no such thing as buying clothes here, or anything else almost, so that is not so much a problem. We all have been eating less. In fact I have lost about 20 pounds. I had to write to America to get some jeans sent, because all of my other pants fall off. None of my nice clothes fit anymore. My mother sent me a package with some of the clothes in it that I wore in high school. I am now wearing them, too.

I lost some weight in another way, too. To get one's hair cut here, you must go to these little wooden shack-like places and sit in a "chair" and look into a cracked mirror and have a guy "cut" your hair with sticky hand clippers. Normally I go to a guy that does a pretty good job. Generally they cut it much shorter here than even they do in the family in the U.S., but that is OK, because it is cooler, and the bugs don't have a place to live. Well, my usual guy was gone, so I went to another one. He looked at me with a smirk as if to say "What are you doing here?" I meekly asked him if it would be at all possible for him to cut my hair.

Taking pity on me he relented and gave me a seat. Now his shop is just barely big enough for two people to stand and look at each other, but little more. So he had a little difficulty in maneuvering around. He had to place me in a position where I couldn't see the mirror, which really didn't matter anyway because it wasn't a whole lot more effective than looking at a tree. Anyway he started to cut. I told him at least ten times in as many languages as I knew that I didn't want the kind you put polish on and buff to a high gloss when finished. I just wanted a trim.

I think that is where I made my mistake. He got the feeling that I was telling him what I wanted, and I think his pride was injured. Anyway he began to cut. At first I didn't think too much was out of order, but there seemed to be an awful draft in his shop. Then he turned me a little and I caught a glimpse of the mirror. Well, at first I didn't recognize the guy I saw, except that he vaguely resembled me. In fact, it was

me. I let out a cry of astonishment. My hair has not been ¼-½ of an inch long since I was born.

It is sad to watch the Christian faith be crushed out, not just here but in all underdeveloped countries. People put their whole lives into trying to help people, and do great things on a humanitarian level, but grow so tired and discouraged because of the lack of real effect their work has had. They may bandage a wound, but they don't get anywhere curing the disease. We have to do more than just bandage the wound, futile as it may sound even to the missionaries. But the answer is there if we only open our eyes.

There has not been too much happening. We have been having a few more friends coming by more often. But it is a little touchy sometimes because of the terrible relationships of the various races. America has a race problem, but nothing like the tribes of Africa.

Bill gave us an old dehumidifier which is in the process of becoming our refrigerator. It may sound a little strange, but we are building a wooden refrigerator. Hopefully it will even freeze meat, etc. With the heat of the summer the meat is bad before you have a chance to use it. So far there have been only a few sand storms and real hot days. Other than that it has been really nice.

Recently I have been helping Bill repair his Land Rover. But in talking to him and his wife I have learned a great deal. They have been here for seven years and before that they spent many years in Senegal trying to get into the country. He felt for quite some time that God was calling to him here. He has told me stories of when he used to live in the Senegal River valley evangelizing up and down it. The Senegal River valley is just about as miserable a place as one can find in the whole world. In the summer the temperatures climb beyond recognition and the floods make it so humid that the air is just a mist. There are sedentary farmers that live there and know a life like we could not even imagine everything from fighting lions and other animals, to the racial tribal wars and conflicts. Yet he went with another guy trekking down the valley preaching and witnessing.

His whole life since he became a Christian has been like that. After many, many struggles and seeming defeats he was finally allowed to come into this country and given a job teaching English. That was seven years ago. He and his wife then had three children and made a life here. She is a nurse and a midwife and they preach a Sunday service to the foreigners here. In reality it means only about 7-10 people gathered in their home on Sundays. He is helping us a lot.

But for me it serves as a guide. I know that with the Divine Principle and the level of work that we are doing today we have to surpass everything that the Christians have done up to this point. That doesn't necessarily mean that it would be better for me to go trekking up the Senegal River valley, but it means that we have to have the heart and the love of God more than him, and have the resulting determination and perseverance and faith more than him. That is a big job in many ways. Looking at it from the point of view of knowing the Principle, it sort of humbles me. We come on their foundation; whether or not it is what it should be to the extent that it should be, still it is there and we have to inherit the spirit at least. Coupled with the reality of what we are trying to do not only on the spiritual but on the physical, our faith should be so much more.

In some ways it is awesome. It is like I feel this dynamo that has so much power that it is scary, like a huge gyroscope inside spinning at full speed. I could never control it. Centered on the right direction it guides and takes me where I could never go, but if it becomes off balance, or if the guiding force is gone somehow and I am left to handle it, it spins all askew. It is very hard to explain, but that is what the level of faith that we are approaching has. It is opening up those big power reserves that depend every moment on our complete connection with God. Without that connection we lose control in short order. That is what a daily connection with God is beginning to look like to me. We know we can fulfill, we have been given that assurance. So we have just to believe it and do it.