

## The Heart of Witnessing in Surinam Includes Experiencing Father's Course

Barbara Joosten Stupple

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*Barbara Joosten Stupple*

*In this testimony a young German member describes what it was like as to find herself a missionary for our church, alone in Surinam, in 1975. It was prepared for publication in 1989, but seemingly never officially published.*

My mission country really became my country, and accepted me as its daughter. And no matter how imperfect we missionaries may be, through us, it is a country claimed for True Parents.

When I received my mission country, my understanding about God's providence of restoration was not very comprehensive. I was unable to understand it in the larger context. Therefore, I only focused on the spiritual aspect. I thought that we simply had to use the same method of street witnessing, and that our future family would develop just as the German family. I had no clear concepts or plans. The only thing I could offer to God when I talked with Him about my desire to save the country,

was my strong will and the readiness to do everything. I was the first missionary to arrive. [Note: each country was assigned one missionary from Japan, one from the United States, and one from Germany. Barbara was the German missionary to Surinam.]

During the three weeks I was alone, I had deeper experiences in my relationship to God than ever before. I really sensed Him as my Parent. Often I felt how He stroked my hair, or how He embraced me. When I was fighting to be very close to God, I often shed tears. I wanted to bring results to God as quickly as possible, but I disregarded the cultural differences and the language barrier. But even with my high ideals and strong inspiration, soon enough, I brushed the rough edges of reality!

On the day I arrived, I set a one-week condition to go street witnessing from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. I had jotted down some phrases from the Principle book translated into the language used by my country, and with this I tried to contact the people. It took me a long time to muster up the courage to speak to someone. And finally standing before that first person, I did not know how to go on after I introduced myself. I wanted to say so much, and desperately tried to find words. The first woman simply could not understand me. She became impatient and went away. I did not give up, but I felt as if her rejection had spiritually cut off one of my limbs.



*The Surinam center*

I am sure that to the people I looked quite the greenhorn, quite the tourist. The capital city is not so large and everybody pays attention to newcomers. I felt that I was a strange element among them. At noontime, the sun became unbearably hot, the atmosphere was humid and heavy, and to top it off, the mosquitoes tried to bite wherever possible! Around one o'clock, I was all alone in the street. Everything was closed. I felt so lonely. I sat down on a bench near the river and pondered how I could make better contacts with the people. After I started up again, I asked people to point out the post office, a telephone, the Embassy. This was a good idea. The people were always ready to help, so I could at least lay a foundation for

relationships. When I entered the main market, I was almost overwhelmed by the spiritual atmosphere. So many poor and crippled people were begging. And many more poor people were trying to sell their vegetables or other things. I felt as if I almost lost myself among all these people of different colors and different languages. I thought, How is it possible to restore all these people?

If I compare my impression of that time with today, I can really understand what a difference there is if a country has a spiritual foundation or not. Those first weeks, the sensation that only God and I were in this country to accomplish restoration became more than real.



*With local members*

When I returned to my small rented room every evening, I always reported all my experiences to God. I was glad that at least in these moments I could speak with someone. Sometimes I tallied up the number of times I spoke that day. I gained a better understanding of and could empathize with mute people. I became sensitive to the slightest smile, and became hungry for even the smallest word someone would say in response to me, and I could see how precious all these things are. In the beginning, God sent me some people who really acted like parents to me. They bought me my first food and even paid my room rent. I never felt this was because of me, but rather that through them, the spiritual world of the nation was welcoming God.



*Local crafts business venture*

Sometimes, I became very lonely. Since I could not speak to the people deeply about matters of heart, I started to pray that my brother missionaries would finally come. I remember promising God, "If my brothers come, I will do everything for them, and I will never quarrel with them." I promised so many things to God. When they finally did come, I felt as if I experienced something equivalent to a spiritual cold shower. Reality really woke me up! Both God and Satan surely tested the sincerity of my promises.

Soon the American missionary's first spiritual son accepted the Principle and moved in with us. I had so much contact with him, that I really

felt like his mother. I had this same feeling toward many of our first contacts. Even though they were not my spiritual children, I cared for them so deeply, they became like my own. Our first spiritual son's ancestors caused him difficulties because they had been heavily involved in voodoo and spiritual things. He often had moments of possession and very undisciplined behavior. I always tried to be very strict with him. Maybe sometimes I was too absolute. My brothers told me I should be more motherly. Since at first my two missionary brothers neither took care of educating him nor assumed the position of parent, I thought that at least I had to give him strict direction. I felt that it was so enormously important to snatch away our first spiritual son from the hands of Satan. But in working to accomplish this, I so often realized



my inability as a mother. Even in my prayers I felt blocked, and that I faced an impenetrable wall within myself.

I set fasting and prayer conditions. I knew that I could not face our son if I could not become a true mother. I often cried because I simply did not know how to go on. When he felt too much pressure he became possessed and his whole personality changed in that moment. Sometimes seeing Father's photo was enough of a condition for the spirits to leave him, but not always. I felt the impulse to fight for him like a mother would do if somebody was trying to take away her child.



There were really some impossible situations. One time he even ate glass (without hurting himself), and another time he fell down from the second floor of the house. Despite these things, I felt that God had sent him as a true representative of this nation. I felt that if we could save him, we would symbolically solve all problems of the nation. That is why I asked God in desperation what I should do as a mother.

Yet I was simply ignorant about how to handle spiritual possession. Through an extreme situation I learned what to do. I was alone with him in the center. Suddenly, he became possessed. His face started to change and he locked the door. Then he took an iron bar and said that he would beat me. There was no possibility for me to leave the room. After I started to pray, my mind suddenly became very calm. I sat down on a chair, and praying internally, I started to talk to him in a very calm way. After a while, the troublesome spirits left him. He was not conscious of what had happened. The two of us set many conditions, and sometimes it seemed that he had really overcome these

problems.

Then after some months, it happened again. He stole some money from us. Unfortunately, he eventually left the Family. After that time, he broke into our center and stole several things. Then he went to several Christian groups, and from this a wave of persecution was initiated against us. These are the things which can really challenge the heart of a parent.

For a time, I was in a position to live with and serve one of our black members. During this time, I often had the feeling that I was separated from God. Spiritual or mission work was no longer possible because I was so busy. I often felt I did not have my own mind anymore. At a certain point, I almost gave up. When I prayed, I could only cry, since I just did not know how and what I should change within myself. It was only gradually that I began to understand that I was restoring the position of slaves and slave owners. After I knew that I, as a white "servant," was suffering the same treatment as the black slaves had three hundred years before, I could bear the situation more easily.

During this time, it helped me very much to read Father's words about the necessity for fallen man to go through the positions of servant of servant, servant, adopted child, and true child before we can become true parents ourselves.

I realized then, and understand even more deeply today, that the heart of witnessing also involves experiencing Father's suffering, but at the same time, not losing the awareness of being God's child.