

THE STORY OF FRAU GERTRUDE SPECHT

Author Unknown

Although Brother Scott L. Anderson was not there when the missionaries first met this German lady, the following account coincides with what she later related to him herself. Brother Anderson served as the assistant to the president in the Germany South Mission and came to know her personally.

Two Elders tracting in Germany experienced an unexpected moment in the mission field. They knocked on a door and the lady who answered said, "Come in." According to one of the Elders, "This never happened to us; not even the members would say that to us."

One Elder said, "Do you know who we are?"

"You want to talk about religion, don't you?" she said.

"Yes, we do," explained the other.

"Oh, come in. I've been watching you walk around the neighborhood. I'm so excited to have you here. Please come into my study."

They went in and seated themselves and she sat down behind the desk. She looked at them with a smile, and then pointed to three PhD's hanging over her head: one in theology, the study of religion; one in philosophy, the study of ideas; and one in European history, which specialized in Christianity.

She then rubbed her hands together and said, "Do you see this row of books?"

They looked at a well-arranged row of books and manuscripts. She said, "I wrote them all. I'm the theology professor at the University of Munich. I've been doing this for more years than you've been alive. I love to talk about religion. What would you like to discuss?"

One inspired Elder said, "We'd like to talk about the Book of Mormon."

She said, "I don't know anything about the Book of Mormon."

He said, "Good."

Twenty minutes later they walked out of the room after giving her a Book of Mormon and bearing their testimonies.

It was in a small room filled with people when Scott Anderson first saw Gertrude Specht, dressed in white. She stood up in front of this small congregation of people and said, "Before I'm baptized I'd like to tell you my feelings."

"In Amos chapter 8:11 it says there will be a famine of the word of God. I've been in that famine for 70 plus years. Why do you think I have three PhD's? I've been

hungering for truth and have been unable to find it. Then a few months ago, two boys walked into my home. I want you to know these boys are very nice and wonderful young men but they didn't convert me. They couldn't; they don't know enough."

And then she smiled and said, "But since the day they walked in my door, I have read the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, all of Talmage's great writings, *Evidence and Reconciliations* by John A. Widsoe and 22 other volumes of Church doctrine."

She then said something that I think is a challenge for every one of us. She said, "I don't think you members know what you have."

Then in her quiet, powerful way, she said, "After those years of studying philosophy, I picked up the D&C and read a few verses that answered some of the greatest questions of Aristotle and Socrates. When I read those verses, I wept."

Then she said again, "I don't think you members know what you have. Don't you understand the world is in a famine? Don't you know we are starving for what you have? I am like a starving person being left to a feast. And over these weeks I have been able to feast in a way I have never known possible."

Her powerful message and her challenging questions were then ended with her favorite scripture, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

She said, "These missionaries don't just carry membership in the church in their hands, they carry within their hands the power to make the atonement of Jesus Christ full force in my life. Today I'm going into the water and I'm going to make a covenant with Christ for the first time with proper authority. I've wanted to do this all my life."

When she was finished being baptized, and before she received the Holy Ghost, she stood and said, "Now I would like to talk about the Holy Ghost for a while." She then gave us a wonderful talk about the gift of the Holy Ghost. None of us will forget that day.

Later two young missionaries, both relatively new (one had been out about five months, the other three weeks), accidentally knocked on the door of a seminary housing facility in Reangansburg, Germany. Inside, were many men studying to become priests. The Elders hadn't realized that this was their complex because the door they had knocked on looked like any other. They were invited in. In somewhat of a panic, a man inside responded, "I am sorry we just don't have time right now."

The two missionaries were relieved, but then he said, "Would you come back next Tuesday and spend two hours addressing all of us and answer questions about your church?"

They agreed that they would. They made a phone call to the mission president and cried for help. The mission president called Elder Anderson and his companion and said, "Do you think that dear lady that was just baptized into the church would like to come help these two missionaries with this assignment?"

He called her to ask if she would like to go, and she said, “more than I would like to eat, more than I would like to sleep, more than...” He said, “Fine. You don’t have to explain.”

The mission president and his wife drove her to the seminary and as they went in, she talked to the two missionaries who had originally been invited, and said, “You are wonderful young men. Would you each spend about two minutes bearing your testimony and then sit down and let me have the remaining time, please?”

They were grateful for their assignment. They bore their testimonies and then seated themselves. Then she got up and said, “For the next 30 minutes I would like to talk to you about historical apostasy.” She knew every date and fact. She had a PhD in this. She talked about everything that had been taken away from the Savior’s Church.

Then, the next 45 minutes were doctrinal. She gave many examples of doctrinal changes, and when they happened.

By the time she was done, she looked at them and said, “In 1820 a boy walked into a grove of trees. He had been in a famine just like I have been. He knelt to pray, because he was hungry just like I have been. He saw God the Father and His Son. I know that is hard for you to believe that they could be two separate beings, but I know they are.” She shared scriptures that showed the separate nature of the Godhead.

She then, point by point, date by date, from the Doctrine and Covenants put back the organizational structure of Christ’s church. The last of her talk was absolutely brilliant. She doctrinally put the truth back in place, principle by principle.

When she finished this profound talk, she said, “I have been in the famine as talked about in Amos. You know that because last year I was here teaching you.” For the first time, we realized she had been their theology professor. She continued by saying, “Last year when I was here teaching you, I told you that I was still in a famine. I have been led to a feast. I invite you to come.” She finished with her testimony and sat down.

What happened next was hard to understand. These many men stood and for the next several minutes gave her a standing ovation. Why were they applauding? They said things like, “To hear someone so unashamed of the truth, to hear someone teaching with such power, to hear someone who finally has conviction.”

Additional remarks by Brother Scott Anderson, February 2001:

“She was baptized on the 17th of December 1970. The information about Amos 8:11 is as she reported it to me personally. ...I can confirm that her testimony of the famine in the land and her love of the scripture John 8:32 were real because she reported these to me personally in our office in Munich. I have heard her share her testimony as recorded.”

“Sister Specht translated materials for the church after her baptism and died within a few years. The experience with the priests happened while I was serving as the assistant to President M. Blaine Peterson from Ogden. She was one of the most enthusiastic new

converts I have ever met. She appeared at the mission office shortly after her conversion with over 200 pages of "Evidences and Reconciliation" by John A. Widson translated because she said the German Saints need to have more of the great teachings of the brethren."

Do we really know what we have?