



Frank and Kathy Melcher -Coppieters - 1998

Meeting Frank Coppieters

It was for sure happening! Twenty-eight students from Centrum Gea signed up for the retreat in America. Me included! I felt so thankful that this exciting event had shown up in my life and for the choice I had made to become part of this adventure. A date was announced that Frank Coppieters from the Living Light Center in Portland would come to Centrum Gea in de Pinte to meet all the Belgians that signed up for the retreat. Frank is Belgian and lived in De Pinte in his earlier life. We all have Dutch as our native language. Frank would give us all the details about what they had planned for our soon upcoming trip. To keep the cost down, his American students were opening their homes for us to stay at. What a gift! This is my preferred way of traveling and exploring the world, connecting with people from another culture in their own home environment. I was thrilled!

That evening arrived, it was June 8th, 1998. Full of anticipation I parked my car at Centrum Gea. Joost was standing at the door and invited me into the main area of their private home which I had not entered before. It felt like I was stepping into many unknowns.

There was lots of energy that evening. I only knew some of the students, most of them were students from other classes in Centrum Gea that I had never met before. I was walking around like Alice in Wonderland, shaking hands and introducing myself. This was such a new and exciting moment for me. I had made the decision for this trip myself, relying only on my inner guidance. It felt right to do this and I acted on it! I didn't consider anyone's approval or consent.

While saying hi to people, I shook hands with a man I had never seen before. Like me, he was walking around introducing himself to other people. "Hi", he said, "I am Frank". "Hi", I said, "I am Mieke". I shook his hand, as I had done with at least ten other people before. While I was shaking his hand, something very unexpected happened. I felt a very strong energy stream flowing from his hand through my hand, all the way through my arm and into my shoulder. "Waaaw! What was that", I thought!? I didn't say anything to him. We just moved on

introducing ourselves to more people around the room. Then Joost called everyone into the main living room asking us to take a seat.

I sat down and noticed that “the Frank” that introduced himself to me and from whom I felt the strong energy stream flowing through my hand and arm was sitting on a chair in the middle of our big circle of people. “Oh you are THE Frank from America!”. I blurred out. I had no idea. Frank laughed, " Yes, I am the Frank from America". That made it even more interesting. Two things about our first meeting were very intriguing. First, was the strong energy stream I felt. Second, Frank was not introducing himself as the teacher or the facilitator, but just as his own personal self. Very cool! Very natural and humble! That really struck me.

Frank welcomed everyone, introduced himself and began sharing about the trip. I felt very open and was so curious for what I was about to discover. I opened my notebook grabbed my pen and started recording.

Departure on July 16. We gather at the airport in the large departure hall. Bring passport, insurance papers, Eurocross card and International Drivers license. We arrive at 6 PM local time. Oregon is nine hours later than Belgium.

We will be with 50 people in our group of which 14 American adults and four American children.

Our week retreat starts with two days in Portland at the Living Light Center followed by five days in Breitenbush Hot Springs. Breitenbush is a sacred place where Native American Indians came together to dissolve their conflicts. It is a place where emotions can easily come to the surface. The hot water pools and outdoor sauna are always available. Bring snorkel for a warm water re-birthing session, bring a flashlight, binoculars, good walking shoes and loose sports wear.

We have a choice of renting a tent or sharing a cabin.

About our program in Breitenbush. Breakfast is at 8 AM. Before breakfast there is an opportunity to do yoga or Tai chi or meditation. It's a way to let go of what ever comes to the surface. After breakfast we will be in session until 1 PM. Followed by lunch and a break until 4:30 PM. Then we have another session until dinner at 6 PM. Followed by an evening session.

We will do lots of shamanic work and there is an opportunity to participate in a sweat-lodge. We can bring our own instruments, like a drum, or there will be opportunities to buy some there.

Our last day in Breitenbush will be Sunday, July 26th. Then every one will go back to their guest families. A fun idea is it to bring them some Belgian Chocolates. You cannot bring any herbs or food into the US, except if it is packaged.

The first two days in Portland we will meet in Franks home at the Living Light Center from 10 AM until 5 PM. There are lots of things to explore in Portland. The worlds biggest bookstore is

there!!! There is a New Age store with lots of Cd's. There is currently in a museum an exposition about Egypt that comes from Germany.

We leave Portland on August 7, at 10:30 AM. We arrive back in Brussels at 8:40 AM on August 8th.

Then Frank announced with which guest family each of us would stay. Exciting! Most guest families were hosting one person. Frank announced that Jane, a 60 year old nurse, was inviting two people to her home. That was Eliane Roofthoof and me. I looked around to see who Eliane was. We both expressed our excitement towards each other. Frank further expressed his appreciation for Jane's beautiful large home with private beach at the Willamette river, in Milwaukee. Lucky Eliane and me!



Jane's House

I wrote it all down. The more details I heard about this trip, the more excited I got! Everything I heard made my heart sing! I was congratulating myself for taking on this incredible adventure!



Mieke and Eliane - 1998

Paul's experience: I first learned about the joint retreat with the Belgians at a class meeting with Frank and Marilyn. This would be a week long international alternative healing experience with people from a completely different culture. I was intrigued by the possibilities of learning how similar or dissimilar the approaches to and modalities of healing were.

I imagined the coming together of two disparate cultures with similar desires and approaches but was concerned about a possible language barrier. Would there be awkward interactions in our working and living customs? Would there be enough commonality to have a meaningful and productive exchange? The only foreign language I had taken was in high school and that was German, not Dutch. Frank eased my concern by stating that most of the Belgians spoke some English and that any communication challenges could be easily overcome.

I strongly wanted to attend this workshop with the Belgians but could not see how I could financially afford to do it. I was struggling to meet the financial requirements of parenting and providing for myself and my children. I voiced my desire and concern with Frank and Marilyn.

After a week or two Frank came up with a brilliant idea. If I would be part of the child care team I could attend some of the workshop exercises and be in Breitenbush with my three children. This solution was a miracle! I could attend and my three young children could come too. This was going to happen!



Frank and Kathy Coppeters - 2019
Livinglightcenter.com



Mieke and Eliane - 1998

Mieke's Voice 2020©Mieke Benton
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(Sharing permitted with my name and email included)
(With a simple email let me know if you like
to be added or removed from this list).

Week 1 - Introduction - My early life
Week 2 - A Rough Start
Week 3 - Vision
Week 4 - History Lesson
Week 5 - Bookstore Caecilia
Week 6 - Invisible Hand
Week 7 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 1 - My parents Anny & Hugo
Week 8 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 2 - My brother Jeroen
Week 9 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 3 - My sister Kathleen
Week 10 - My family, a circle of 5. Part 4 - Something about myself, Mieke
Week 11 - Encounters with extraterrestrials
Week 12 - The Movie E.T. - The Extra -Terrestrial
Week 13 - What happens after the body dies?

Mieke's Voice - Part 2

Week 14 - Introduction - Relationships
Week 15 - Expressing my authentic nature
Week 16 - Sexuality - part 1 - Unity
Week 17 - Sexuality - part 2 - Separation
Week 18 - Sexuality - part 3 - Menstruation
Week 19 - Intimate Relationships
Week 20 - America - part 1 - Newspaper Article
Week 21 - America - part 2 - Stepping into a movie
Week 22 - Another taste of freedom as a college student
Week 23 - Riding the waves, both high and low
Week 24 - A Holistic approach to healing
Week 25 - Overnight resident counselor in a high school
Week 26 - Mieke the younger in action - Part 1
Week 27 - Mieke the younger in action - Part 2
Week 28 - Totem Initiation
Week 29 - Extra Freedom and Independence
Week 30 - First Wake-up call
Week 31 - Second Wake-up call
Week 32 - Home Ter Linde

Mieke's Voice - Part 3

Week 33 - Introduction - Learning to Love myself
Week 34 - My last cigarette!
Week 35 - I know there is somebody out there!
Week 36 - Center Gea - The Power of Sound
Week 37 - Moroccan Flavors
Week 38 - Nightly Procedure

Mieke's Voice - Part 4

Week 39 - Introduction - Our paths coming together
Week 40 - Special Announcement in Center Gea
Week 41 - Meeting Frank Coppieters