

MARYKNOLL HISTORY IN AFRICA PART TWO

MISSION TO NON-CATHOLIC AREAS

INTRODUCTION

Part One of this history documented the establishment of parish apostolates in Kenya, including some specialized educational and social communications work done by Maryknollers in Uganda and Kenya. The notable distinguishing feature was not the type of mission work done, which was basically the same as in Tanzania, but merely that it was done in places other than Maryknoll's two original dioceses of Musoma and Shinyanga. Another difference was more noteworthy, however: namely that Maryknoll took only one parish in each of the three dioceses in Kenya, and on a contract basis. Maryknoll did not accept responsibility for a territory, nor did it intend to remain permanently in any of those parishes.

In Part Two we will read that beginning in the early 1970s Maryknoll's evolving movement in Africa was not only to different places but to a qualitatively different type of work, as a result of a radically changed definition of mission. The rationale for Maryknoll movement out of Tanzania to Kenya had an intrinsic logic that would inevitably take it to other countries of Africa, and also to places that had few Catholics, including to predominantly Muslim areas.

It can be argued that Maryknoll's initial emphasis in Kenya was primarily pastoral, even though some was non-parochial (education, catechetics, social communications). Even the teaching in public universities took place in an overwhelmingly Christian milieu, despite only about twenty percent of students being Catholic. Although not pastoral, as normally understood, university teaching was also not aimed at a non-Christian audience. The Units that were set up by the Maryknoll General Council in the 1970s were by definition aimed at non-Christian populations, creating an important distinction from the original work in Kenya.

Part Two will detail several mission apostolates in northern Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia in which the primary motives and essential goals were pre-evangelization and ecumenism, and will look at the underlying reasons for these new types of apostolates. It should also be noted at this point that although this is a history of Maryknoll in Kenya, the works in both Ethiopia and Sudan were always very closely linked with the Africa and later Kenya Region. The Regional Superiors of Africa and Kenya were directly involved in the establishment of these works, even if some of the Units were under the General Council, and always remained intimately related with each of the pastoral works and Units.

Before detailing each of the specific apostolates, it is worth considering at some length the evolution of mission thinking, both within Maryknoll and the wider Church.

VATICAN II; MISSION AD GENTES; ESTABLISHMENT OF UNITS

The Second Vatican Council stated in its 1965 Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. The Church, therefore, has this exhortation for her children: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers

of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among all people, as well as the values in their societies and cultures.”

What? Other religions true and holy? We should dialogue and collaborate with them, and preserve the values in their societies, cultures and religions?

This Declaration, as was true of most Vatican II Declarations, was staid, understated and unrecognized by the international press. Most American Catholics are probably still unaware of it. But what it said was revolutionary, not only for missionary societies such as Maryknoll, but for the Catholic Church as a whole. As a result of this and other statements on mission in Vatican II documents, Maryknoll began a soul-searching exercise of what mission meant in the contemporary world and how it should respond to the radical new understandings of mission. This did not happen immediately, of course, but evolved gradually. (Or perhaps not; looking back from forty years later, that Maryknoll had established four Units going to non-Christian parts of the world less than ten years after Vatican II, and was earnestly investigating many other possibilities, is evidence that Maryknoll responded quite rapidly to the Council’s invitation to new types of mission.) The changed understanding of mission also did not occur without much internal division within Maryknoll. Very few missionaries were aware of the theological and missiological underpinnings of Council Declarations on the Church and Mission Work, especially most of those ordained prior to 1962, when the Council began.

Change, however, was not something new to Maryknoll. In actuality, change in structures in response to a changed mission reality had been part and parcel of Maryknoll’s internal ordering from the beginning. Fr. Larry Vaughan wrote a long paper in January, 1992, on the evolution of the Unit structure in Maryknoll. He pointed out that when Maryknoll went to China in 1918 there was no local superior, but that as missionaries increased in numbers and new mission fields were accepted by Maryknoll, Society Superiors were appointed for each new mission area. Maryknoll also drew a distinction between the local Ordinary responsible for the operation of the local Church and the Society Superior responsible for Maryknoll affairs. The 1956 General Chapter mandated a restructuring of the Regional Structure, with the establishment of Mission Regions, the election and appointment of the Regional Superior, the setting of terms for the Superior, and the election of consultors for the Regional Council. This Chapter also mentioned that Mission Units can exist and that a Unit can become a Region or vice versa that a Region could become a Unit.

The 1966 Chapter engaged in a deep examination of the Council Declaration on Missionary Activity, first noting the new mission theology contained therein. The Declaration recommended experimentation in mission methods, approaches and structures. The Chapter authorized the establishment of the Mission Research and Planning Department (MRPD), which would research the modalities of new mission structures based upon apostolates rather than territorial boundaries, and based on the needs of the people rather than on a structure imposed by an ecclesiastical authority.

In late 1966 the Vatican abrogated the *Jus Commissionis*, which referred to the commissioning or entrusting by Rome of a territory to a Missionary Society. Prior to 1966 the Mission Society had been expected to provide all necessary personnel and funding to properly establish a church within an ecclesial territory. These territories were usually called Apostolic Prefectures and not Dioceses, even if the head was a Bishop. As

of 1967, the Church decreed that administration of all apostolic works within an ecclesiastical territory was entrusted to the local church. Rather than being in charge, Mission Societies would make agreements (contracts) with the local Ordinary for specific apostolates. It would be years, unfortunately, before the ramifications of this decree were fully understood. In the two Maryknoll territories of Tanzania, for example, the local Bishops and clergy expected to be financially subsidized by Maryknoll forever. Additionally, the Bishops of the Dioceses in Kenya where Maryknollers worked expected Maryknoll to retain its parish commitments indefinitely.

As the Maryknoll General Council and others reflected on these new matters, they began to recognize anew Maryknoll's primary purpose, called *Mission ad Gentes*, mission to the nations. This elevated evangelization – sometimes called pre-evangelization – in non-Christian areas to the top rung of Maryknoll Society priorities. Pastoral work and establishment of the church would continue to be important components of missionary work for Maryknoll, but no longer the prime emphases.

In 1970, a crucial ICSA (Inter Chapter Society Assembly) meeting elucidated a rationale for experimentation in mission work and called for a new thrust toward specialized ministries versus structural parishes. It issued a call for Maryknollers to volunteer for specific apostolates that would be carried out by a group that would form a Mission Unit. The Units could be within Regions or independent of any Region. The emphasis was on experimentation with new apostolates, methods and structures.

Maryknoll membership received the startling announcement in 1971 that Maryknollers would be assigned to a "Mission X." The anonymity of this place was not to deceive Maryknollers but merely highlighted the lack of certainty that Maryknollers, all American, would be allowed to go there. The original Mission X was Pakistan, and four Maryknollers actually began studies in the Urdu language. Unfortunately, the civil war between East and West Pakistan that year made it impossible for Maryknoll to go there and later even getting visas to Pakistan proved impossible. For a period of about a year Maryknoll looked for another country, which it called Mission X. Finally, two of the original four, Frs. Dick Baker and Vince Cole, who were both newly ordained, went to Indonesia, joined by three older Maryknollers.

The assignment of Maryknollers to Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, inaugurated a new emphasis for Maryknoll assignments. In the early 1970s four Units were established, to go to Bangladesh, Sudan, Brazil and Samoa. Later that decade Maryknoll also went to Nepal and Yemen. The latter assignment lasted only a few years, but gave rise to the Middle East Unit. The main criterion was to work in non-Christian areas, but another criterion was to work in areas with a very weak institutional Church lacking in clergy.

First, though, the 1972 General Chapter had to address growing divisions within Maryknoll membership due to the new emphases being articulated about mission. Fr. Bill O'Leary, who was on the General Council from 1972 to 1978, wrote some reflections on the establishment of Units.

By 1972 the Society was badly polarized: many were leaving the priesthood, vocations were plummeting and the morale of many Maryknollers was badly shaken. The divisions were between one group which saw Units and the new approaches to mission as connected to the need for relevance to

contemporary mission, and another group which viewed these discussions as causes of fear, anger and disillusionment. The 1972 Chapter was probably the longest ever, four months, in which all these issues were heatedly but honestly discussed.

In the end, though, a general consensus was reached. This Chapter revitalized the Society, started the Lay Missioner Program, emphasized work in Social Justice and Peace, reorganized the Personnel Office, encouraged initiatives in new topics for Orbis Books, and called for innovative mission approaches. Throughout, the emphasis was on the primacy of mission, which became the hallmark of the ensuing General Council.

There were some residual issues that needed our attention, though. Society morale was down. There were voices in the Church and wider society calling for a “moratorium on mission.” Local churches were emerging rapidly and a number of Maryknollers were confused about their roles. Another issue that we perceived was the ambiguity of regional loyalty. The Regional Structure in Maryknoll had worked very well for decades and Maryknollers had deep feelings of loyalty to their Region. This was the positive side. The negative side of this was that those within Regions who had become aware of other challenges felt intimidated against raising issues, for fear of being considered disloyal. There was a felt need for greater freedom in our missionary responses, which required a new form of governance rather than the vertical model.

Just briefly it should be noted that the growing Maryknoll emphasis on social justice arose from two extremely important documents of the Church in 1971. In May, 1971, Pope Paul VI enunciated very clearly the link between evangelization and justice in his apostolic letter. Several months later it was beautifully stated by the Synod of Bishops Document on Justice in the World of November, 1971: “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.” The promotion of social justice and peace increasingly became integral components of Maryknoll’s mission activity, both in the U.S. and throughout the world.

In Africa, Maryknoll assigned priests to both Ethiopia and Sudan, as will be discussed below, and investigated other countries. In 1976, Fr. Bill Galvin, who was working for the Mission Research and Planning Department, visited three countries in West Africa: Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso (called Upper Volta at that time). Fr. Jim Roy, who had just finished working in Eldoret Diocese of Kenya in late 1976, spent over a month in Burkina Faso and Mali, but his stay never resulted in any Maryknoll work in West Africa. Both he and Galvin stated that one drawback to working in these countries, which all had large Muslim populations, was the need for fluency in French in addition to a local language. Roy, who is of French ancestry and a native French speaker, said that French people, certainly in Paris, don’t accept anyone as speaking French correctly unless they can do it with a pure Parisian accent. Roy spent five weeks in Burkina Faso and wrote a fascinating 23 page report of his visit to two dioceses, Ouagadougou and Kaya. Both dioceses were administered by the Missionaries of Africa (known then as White Fathers) and had very few diocesan priests. Catholics made up eight percent of the

population (it was about thirty percent Moslem in the 1970s) but the Church was almost totally dependent on assistance from Europe. Roy visited each of the four parishes of Kaya Diocese and the Bishop showed him a fifth place that he presumed Maryknoll would take. This place would require a fairly large team, including several Lay Missioners who had skills in agriculture and running of cooperatives. However, even though Burkina Faso offered viable opportunities for Maryknoll mission work, the General Council informed the Bishops that Maryknoll did not have personnel available to send there and recommended that they contact French-speaking missionary societies.

Various Maryknollers also looked into possibilities in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and Nigeria (Maryknoll did eventually go to the latter two countries, but only much later). Maryknoll did accept an assignment to Ethiopia, to Nekemte, in 1974, which is covered later in this section. This assignment did not last long, but did not deter Maryknoll from considering other places in Ethiopia. Maryknoll was offered a place in southern Ethiopia, in the Awasa area, where indigenous people lived, and in 1979 both the President of the University of Asmara in Eritrea (still part of Ethiopia then) and the Vatican implored Maryknoll to try to provide professors for that university. (Fr. Bob Moore had taught there from 1973 to 1974.) Maryknoll could not come up with personnel to respond to either of these requests. Maryknoll did, however, send personnel in the years 1974 and 1975 to Ethiopia (half Orthodox and half Muslim) and to Sudan (predominantly Muslim). A leading proponent of these moves was Joe Glynn, who was on the General Council beginning in 1972. Interestingly, in 1971 Glynn, while still Regional Superior in Africa, wrote to the General Council in New York recommending that Mission X be to Ethiopia.

The General Council also recognized an essential distinction in meaning between evangelization, proselytization and conversion. Evangelization referred to the ways of relating with people of other religions enunciated by the Council's Declaration (in Latin called *Nostra Aetate*), such as dialogue, witness and recognizing their values. Maryknollers going to non-Christian countries would not be seeking converts from other world faiths, but rather inter-relating with them, seeking mutual understanding and appreciation, and cooperating with them in the social arena.

There were three other important elements in General Council deliberations and the 1972 Chapter documents, first being the setting up of a new structure to carry out this new work, namely the establishment of units. The units would be small, work collaboratively, and have no superior, although one would be designated as the Unit Representative. Decision-making was to be through consensus (usually; this was up to the members of the unit to decide). The units were to make contracts with the local church to implement a non-parochial apostolate for a set number of years, generally five or six, after which it would be evaluated. It could then be concluded, with the unit members going elsewhere, or continued, depending on the evaluation of the unit with the local church. But it was to be clearly understood by the local church that the unit was not permanent and would not be in charge of an ecclesial territory (i.e. a parish). Unit members would not be replaced if one (or two) of them left, unless the General Council deemed it advisory and of benefit. All these changes were a thorough break from the Regional Structure that Maryknollers were used to, and required education and formation for those joining the Units.

Another noteworthy introduction at that time was the phrase ‘temporary, mobile and flexible.’ Throughout the 1970s there was much debate on what exactly this phrase meant in concrete terms. Did it refer primarily to individuals, who were to be expected to change their apostolates every few years, sometimes in radically different ways? Or, did it refer more to the Maryknoll Society, which should be constantly looking for new apostolates, especially in unevangelized parts of the world, in which to send new personnel, accompanied by a few older missionaries? Some Maryknollers rejected this new conception of mission, and remained in their parishes for decades. Others may have too readily accepted the word ‘temporary,’ as they seemed to prefer to change assignments every three or so years. This new mentality had far-reaching repercussions. Beginning in 1972 Maryknoll began working in ever more countries with a constantly decreasing supply of personnel and the dozen or so regions where Maryknoll had been working for many years up to 1972 began to realize that they were no longer the Society’s priorities.

Finally, the Society introduced a planning process for every apostolate in every Region and Unit. Known popularly as ‘Objectives, Goals and Targets,’ it was mandated for each Maryknoll parish and ministry, and inextricably linked to budget requests. (Paraphrasing the famous Chinese laundry demand: ‘No tickee, no laundry,’ Maryknoll said: ‘No planee, no money.’) However, the planning process was much more comprehensive than merely putting out a list of what one intended to do in the coming year. The process was supposed to begin with an analysis of the current reality in which the missionary lived and worked, followed by an examination of opportunities and resources arising from the analysis, and only then the laying out of a plan that would respond to the initial parts of the process. It also required monitoring throughout the year and a year-end evaluation. In fact, many Maryknollers did not do the analysis, and many just put forth what was basically the same plan each year. So much so, that the Mission Research and Planning Department, which had been started in 1967, was closed in 1986, due to lack of interest.

As we will see, some Maryknollers were willing or at least agreeable to take on assignments in very new and different parts of Africa. As the mission in Ethiopia was chronologically the first, we will begin there.

Nekemte, Ethiopia

That Joe Glynn, while still Regional Superior in Africa, was already seriously looking into possibilities for Maryknoll to work in Ethiopia is made clear by his letter to the General Council in New York in 1971, mentioned above, in which he recommended that Ethiopia be declared the Mission X. His reasoning for this can not be known without access to this letter. It can be presumed that the criteria were the poverty of Ethiopia, paucity of Catholic Church personnel, and the possibilities of ecumenism with Orthodox Church leaders and people. In addition, the local Church in Ethiopia, which included the mission societies working there, were inviting Maryknoll to come and the government at that time was very open to assistance from American missionaries. Opportunities were immediately available that Glynn hoped Maryknoll could make use of. The following year, on April 26, 1972, the Africa Regional Council sent a letter to all Maryknollers working in Africa, explaining its reasons for investigating possibilities for work in Ethiopia and why the Regional Council considered this so important – not only for mission, but also for Maryknoll. Over the next two or three years about a half dozen

Maryknollers made trips to Ethiopia, either to officially investigate possibilities for Maryknoll work or to see for themselves if this was a possible assignment.

Ethiopia is a fascinating, diverse country with a long and unique history, peopled by Semitic and Cushitic ethnic groups physically and culturally distinct from the Bantu and Nilotic peoples of east and central Africa. [This segment on Ethiopia's history is culled from the book, "Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia," by Paul B. Henze, from Wikipedia articles on Ethiopia, and from personal memories of Frank Breen from trips and interviews in Ethiopia.] Most of western and northern Ethiopia is Orthodox, except for lowland areas sloping down towards Sudan where many are indigenous people practicing traditional beliefs, whereas the eastern and southern parts of the country are mainly Muslim or Animist. It is a large country, 1.1 million square kilometers, about the size of Tanzania and Uganda together. In 1973 it included Eritrea and was as large as Tanzania and Kenya put together (Kenya is twice the size of Uganda). Despite the periodic famines, the soil of Ethiopia is very fertile and the highlands, which range from 6000 to 10,000 feet above sea level, with some mountains at between 13,000 and 15,000 feet, have ample rainfall. Addis Ababa, for example, averages about thirty inches of rain just in the four rainy season months of June through September, more than enough to produce good harvests. The country is prone to drought, however, which occurred with increasing frequency and severity in the 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, much of the soil has been degraded due to bad agricultural practices and by 1990 ninety percent of the country had become deforested as compared to 1890, just 100 years previously. The Rift Valley splits the country from north to south, passing by Addis Ababa about sixty miles to the east. The valley is hot, sunny and often dry, whereas the highlands to either side of the valley have a moderate climate and sufficient rain in most years. In the far northeast of Ethiopia the Rift Valley begins at the famous Danakil Depression, the hottest place on the face of the earth.

In 1973 the population was twenty-eight million, a number which has tripled to 82 million in 2010 (and the current figure does not include the population of Eritrea). Orthodox Christians claim to be the majority in the country, but many expatriate Catholic missionaries think that Muslims may in fact be fifty percent of the population. The exact numbers are so politically sensitive that the true ratio of the two faith groups is not accurately known. (U.S. State Dept. figures are Orthodox forty percent and Muslim 45 to 50 percent.) Addis Ababa, one of Africa's mega-cities today, became the nation's capital and seat of the Orthodox Church only at the end of the nineteenth century. It had one million people in 1973 and in 2010 had an estimated five million. This is the central city of the Amhara, the most educated and wealthy ethnic group in the country. (Note though that most Amhara are very poor, especially in the rural areas.) Amharic is the national language, even though this ethnic group has only twenty-five percent of the population. The related Tigrayan people, who currently dominate the government, have an additional seven percent. Conversely, the Oromo, poor, semi-nomadic, and predominantly Muslim, is a much larger ethnic group than the Amhara, making up at least forty percent of the population (some believe their percentage is closer to fifty percent). Ethnic issues have fueled persistent political unrest since 1994, led primarily by Oromo political parties, but at times also by Amharic parties residing in Addis Ababa.

Christianity was brought to Ethiopia in the fourth century by visitors from Egypt and Syria. Frumentius, a Syrian, reached out to the small number of Christians (who

according to legend were there since the apostolic era of the first century; more likely they were traders from the Roman Empire) and supposedly converted the king at the court in Axum. He was then appointed first bishop of Ethiopia by Patriarch Athanasius of Alexandria. It was only at the end of the fifth century, however, that Christian religion became integral to Ethiopia, with the arrival of the “nine Saints” from different parts of the eastern Roman Empire. They were Monophysites, who have a belief in only one nature for Christ, which was declared heresy at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Monophysites had to flee from areas controlled by Byzantines and some went to northern Ethiopia. They became expert in the language and customs of the Axumite people, and then went out establishing monasteries and a strong, indigenized Christianity, albeit Monophysite. They developed a flourishing Ge’ez literature, including translation of the whole bible into Ge’ez from early Greek manuscripts. (The Ge’ez bible, in fact, is one of the earliest bible translations and therefore of great importance in textual criticism regarding original texts of the bible.) Many other religious manuscripts were also translated into Ge’ez. This language disappeared from use in Ethiopia centuries ago but has remained the language of Orthodox liturgies into the 21st century. In the nineteenth century Comboni priests from Italy collaborated with Ethiopian Catholics to produce a Ge’ez rite of the Catholic liturgy – with full permission from the Vatican.

Ethiopian Christianity and sense of national self-determination survived various pressures over the centuries, beginning with the decline of Axum in the seventh century. This was due to several factors, such as a probable environmental crisis brought on by over-centralization, and loss of control of the Red Sea trade routes and ports. Ethiopian Christians moved southward from Axum into the highlands of central Ethiopia, conquering indigenous pagan peoples there, converting them to Orthodox Christianity, and utilizing the fertility of the highlands to survive. This led to a revolt by the Agaw people of central Ethiopia who resented loss of their lands and resources and the taking of many of their people to be slaves. A famous Queen Judith or Gudit attacked Axum, burned churches and promoted paganism at the end of the tenth century. This was in reaction to the Orthodox religion which was perceived as being intimately connected to militant Axumite expansionism. Other indigenous Ethiopian highlanders decided to become Jews, calling themselves Falashas, also in opposition to Christian oppression.

Beginning shortly before the year 1000 the Zagwe Dynasty ruled for about 300 years, but never established any particular center nor did they engage in any extensive building except for a number of churches. Most memorable was Lalibela, who ruled for forty years around the year 1200 and built eleven churches, carved out of rock, located in the town named after him. Unfortunately Ethiopian Christianity became cut off from Mediterranean and European forms of Christianity, although there were the occasional Europeans who reached Ethiopia and some Ethiopians who traveled to Europe. Ignorance of Ethiopia spawned the famous legend of a mysterious Prester John, a Catholic priest supposedly leading at least some parts of Ethiopia. It was during this time that Amharic, a Semitic language, began being used for court administration and in the military. A rich language with an expanding vocabulary and lending itself to excellent use in poetry and literature it increasingly became the lingua franca from Tigray in the north to Shoa in the center. By the nineteenth century it had become the de facto national language of Ethiopia.

Arab Muslims had begun to migrate into Africa in the 7th and 8th centuries, from both Egypt down the Nile into Sudan and western Ethiopia, and from Arabia into the Red Sea coast and Horn of Africa, including into much of eastern and southern Ethiopia. Harar, a walled, fortress city along the major trade route from central Ethiopia to the coast, became a Muslim center of great prestige. For most of this time there were no outright wars between Muslims and Christians although there were a number of skirmishes along territory between the two groups. However, with the victory of the Ottoman Empire in 1517 in the eastern Mediterranean, Muslims began a military expansion including into northeast Africa.

In 1520 Ahmed Gragn (meaning left-handed) led a large army of Muslim troops from Harar into the highlands, killing, raping, pillaging and destroying towns, cities and ancient buildings. So traumatic was his militancy that legends about him survive to modern times, especially in northern Ethiopia. He was killed by Portuguese troops in 1543. Fighting continued between lowland Muslims and highland Christians for another twenty-five years but finally petered out when both sides became exhausted with constant inconclusive battles. At this time the Oromo also began their inexorable migration northward into the highlands, often peacefully but sometimes accompanied by violent conflict.

The Portuguese had first appeared in the northern Indian Ocean around modern Djibouti in the late fifteenth century. They were at first welcomed by Ethiopian rulers and later by the famous Queen Mother Eleni who wielded power behind the throne from the late 1400s to about 1520. It was hoped that Portuguese troops could assist Ethiopian Christians in their conflict with Muslims and also bring in new technology and weapons from Europe. But after Eleni died most Ethiopian emperors and nobility were suspicious of Portuguese motives. The Portuguese did kill Gragn but many died in the battles with Muslims. Several hundred Portuguese soldiers who survived settled in Ethiopia, marrying Ethiopian wives, and in effect becoming Ethiopians. They inculcated European craftsmanship and building techniques into Ethiopia, skills passed on to their descendants, who built many of the churches and bridges in subsequent centuries.

Portuguese Jesuits also came to Ethiopia beginning in the 1520s. The first priests did not accomplish much but in 1557 Jesuit Bishop Andre da Oviedo came with five priests, with the intention to make Ethiopia a Roman Catholic country. They too had little success, due to their overly haughty and presumptuous attitude. One priest, Pero Pais, arrived in 1603 and learned Arabic, Amharic and Ge'ez. He was invited by the new emperor to his capital near Lake Tana and through his kindly patience, knowledge of Ethiopian customs and great relationships with members of the court, the emperor decided to convert to Catholicism. This, however, did not please the nobility, nor did the peasantry welcome changes in liturgical practices. This caused a rebellion and the death of this emperor. Subsequent emperors remained Orthodox although Emperor Susenyos converted to Catholicism in 1622, shortly before Pais died. Susenyos asked for more Jesuit priests but unfortunately the leader, Alfonso Mendes, was an arrogant, quarrelsome man who angered Susenyos and all other Ethiopians. In the 1630s first Susenyos and then his son Fasilidas expelled all foreign missionaries and forbade all elements of Catholicism throughout the country. This resulted, however, in Ethiopia being cut off from outside influences for the next 200 years. The Orthodox faith became indistinguishable from national self-identity.

After hundreds of years of having no central seat of national rule Emperor Fasilidas in 1636 erected a castle in Gondar, about forty miles north of Lake Tana, and this town remained the national center for over a hundred years. It is rich in natural resources, has a pleasant climate at 6500 feet above sea level, and receives sufficient rain for its fertile soil. It is a natural place for the country's capital, although when Menelik II became emperor he moved the capital to his Province of Shoa. Beginning in the mid-1700s Ethiopia experienced a century-long period of anarchy and Gondar fell into decay. Known as the Era of Princes, some twenty-eight reigns emerged from different parts of the country between 1755 and 1855, a period that saw Ethiopia descend into severe weakness.

Despite this, the Gondar era left a positive legacy in at least four important respects, according to Henze:

First, it completed the evolution of the Amharas as the primary rulers of the country. Secondly, it furthered the evolution of the Orthodox Church as a national institution. Thirdly, for all the vicissitudes Gondarine emperors experienced, the concept of the Solomonic monarchy emerged unscathed. Finally, the cultural and economic renaissance that occurred during the Gondarine era continued well beyond the decline of the city as a political capital. Art, poetry, music and religious scholarship continued to flourish, more churches were built, and the city remained a crossroads for commerce and a center of crafts.

In 1855 Tewodros II (called Theodore II in English) was crowned Emperor and began the unification of the country. Despite his energetic attempts to bring about a semblance of modernization, his rule sadly proved mercurial, paranoid and brutal. After imprisoning and killing scores of Europeans he was attacked by a large British military force, causing him to commit suicide in April, 1869. The following two Emperors, Johannes IV (1872 – 1889) and Menelik II (1889 – 1909), consolidated the kingdom, effectively pushed the country out of its isolation, and achieved important steps towards modernization. In the famous battle of Adwa in March, 1896, Menelik defeated the Italian army, preserving Ethiopian independence and preventing colonization by a European power. He also moved the royal court and the seat of the Orthodox Church to Addis Ababa. (His original court is a tourist attraction on Mount Entoto, a hill 4000 feet above the modern city of Addis.) When Menelik died in 1909 his grandson Iyassu became Emperor, but was removed by Orthodox aristocrats due to his close contacts with Islam. Menelik's daughter, Zewditu, was made Empress and her young cousin, Ras Tafari Makonnen, was made the regent with right of succession. In fact, however, he soon became the true power behind the throne of government. At the death of the Empress in 1930, Makonnen became Emperor and took the royal name Haile Selassie. He ruled until 1975, although from 1936 to 1941 the Italian army occupied Ethiopia and Selassie had to live in England. British troops helped restore him to his throne in 1941.

In 1973, when Maryknoll was invited to Ethiopia, it was viewed as a traditional, mostly unchanging country. The Orthodox religion had a dominant position, being the religion of the Amhara who were in charge. It too was an unchanging institution, carrying on liturgies and faith traditions that hearkened back to the Middle Ages. Monsignor Herman Teuben, a Dutch Vincentian priest who was the Apostolic Administrator of

Jimma Vicariate and who was inviting Maryknoll to work in his vicariate, wrote in November, 1973:

The Orthodox Church is essentially a Church of worship and liturgy. The more than 100,000 Orthodox priests – this is the estimate we have for Ethiopia – have had only a liturgical formation without any secular education at all. The liturgical ceremonies on feast days go on for hours.

The Orthodox hierarchy and the Church as a whole have political functions and are strongly linked with the monarchy and aristocracy of the country. Both are leaning on each other for survival.

The average priest has no influence on the modern development of Ethiopia. The young people who have had some secular education consider the priest to be on the lowest social level. University students have ranked priests just above prostitutes, who are at the bottom rank, on a scale of useful functions. The modern development of Ethiopia is bypassing the Orthodox Church and its clergy, who are not able to keep pace, with the result that the youth are leaving the Church.

Fr. Bill McIntire of the Maryknoll General Council visited Ethiopia in January, 1974, and stated, “One gets the impression of a church still in its early stages, in a country where almost everything remains to be done.” Updating and literacy training of the Orthodox clergy was intended to be one contribution that Maryknoll could make at the proposed pastoral institute in Nekemte, which was under the Vicariate of Jimma.

It was not only the Orthodox Church holding Ethiopia back. In January, 1973, Maryknoll Father John Ridyard toured Ethiopia and wrote a long analysis of all aspects of Ethiopian society at that time and a proposal for ways Maryknoll could contribute to both church and society. Ethiopia was still a basically medieval, feudal society in which ninety percent of the population practiced subsistence agriculture. Per capita income was only \$65.00 a year, making Ethiopia one of the two or three poorest countries in the world. Farmers were in effect serfs on land owned by the aristocracy and had to pay the landowner between thirty and fifty percent of their produce each year. Only five percent of the population was literate. The symbiotic relationship between Emperor and the feudal aristocracy ensured that no fundamental change in the structure of land ownership and modes of production would happen soon. Ridyard wrote:

The nature of the central government, which has been ruled by Emperor Haile Selassie for over fifty years, remains obscure. The government is basically an Amhara one and the Shoan Amharas – i.e. the present dynasty in Shoa Province, in which Addis Ababa is located – have tended to hold the most important government posts.

The Amhara family lives more or less on its own and has a very superior attitude towards strangers and outsiders. They identify themselves with the communal symbols of religion, language and district, although these do not provide much sense of community among themselves.

The weakness of the communal bond is reflected in the government. Unity is found largely as a temporary response to a strong external threat. When the threat passes they revert to their former state.

The government itself is split by feuds and factions, some based on the convenience of the moment and some on more permanent differences, which obstruct communal planning and action. The qualities that hamper communal activity form the basis of a system founded on authority, in which vertical lines of communication replace horizontal ones. Authority is generally regarded as good and relationships tend to fall into a pattern of authority and subservience. The authority figures, ranging from minor chiefs to the Emperor himself, hold the society together and when the bond of authority is snapped anarchy results.

Authority cannot be effectively delegated because it is personal to the individual. This has been a constant barrier to the development of institutional government and one of the main reasons Emperors have failed in recent times to build up any kind of an administrative framework through which to exercise their power.

Always wary of sources of authority independent of himself, Haile Selassie took measures to reduce the political strength of the Orthodox Church. In 1942 he issued "Regulations for the Administration of the Church," and in 1955 the revised constitution proclaimed Orthodox the "Established Church of the Empire." These decrees put the Orthodox Church completely under the control of the government, including the appointments of all Bishops.

In this report, Ridyard noted that Selassie seemed aware of how backward Ethiopia had become and that change was necessary. The Emperor was trying to use his immense authority – because only he had the authority and status to be innovative – to introduce changes in government structures that could bring about development in the country. He had begun recruiting a new, educated ruling class of administrators and politicians who could carry out the complex tasks of modernization. Msgr. Teuben also stated that the government was being run much more by technocrats, but that they did not deem the Orthodox Church a viable partner. As a result, many government personnel were reaching out to expatriate missionaries for help in implementation of development projects – a marked change from the strong anti-foreign xenophobia of previous decades and centuries. Msgr. Teuben said that Catholic missionary groups, such as Maryknoll, should try to capitalize on this great opportunity. Ridyard stated in his report, however, that "for many Ethiopians, especially the students and those educated overseas, these changes are too few, not drastic enough, and too slow in being implemented." (He made this prescient comment less than a year and a half before the Derg, Ge'ez for committee, a group of 120 lower-ranking military officers took control of the government.)

In 1973 there were only 150,000 Catholics in Ethiopia, much less than one percent of the population, but the Catholic Church had greater influence than its numbers would indicate. Although very small, its institutional presence was strong, with dedicated, well-funded missionary groups efficiently administering parishes, schools and medical facilities. These made the Catholic Church visible and well respected. The De La Salle Christian Brothers ran (and still run) St. Joseph Boys High School in Addis Ababa that is unquestionably the most prestigious secondary school in the country. All the

leading Amhara, who are mainly Orthodox, insist that their sons go to this school. (In 1975 the Brothers feared that all schools would be nationalized by the Derg; this did not happen, possibly because its leader, Haile Mariam Mengistu, sent his own sons to St. Joseph High School.) Church primary and secondary school work was complemented by the missionary presence in the national university, which in the 1960s and 1970s had a number of French Canadian Jesuits in teaching and administrative positions, even though it was not a Catholic university. After the Red Terror of 1977, when over a hundred university students were killed, the Jesuits left the university.

There were two Catholic Churches in the country, however. One had been established early in the nineteenth century, mostly in Eritrea although it was present all over the country. This used the Ge'ez rite and resembled the Orthodox Church in emphasis on liturgy and lack of education for its priests. It was not going to be a suitable partner for modern development. The other was the Latin rite Church that had been brought in by European missionaries in the twentieth century, primarily the Vincentian (also called Lazarist) Fathers, most of whom came from Netherlands. There were also some Holy Ghost priests in Ethiopia. The latter groups were very interested in various forms of social development, such as modern agriculture, literacy for adults, youth work, post-primary school vocational training, plus the spread of educational and medical works they had already started. The will was there, but the missionaries lacked sufficient personnel and resources.

In 1971 Msgr. Teuben was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Vicariate of Jimma and also became a member of the Ethiopian Bishops' Conference which joined AMECEA in 1973. Teuben and many of his fellow Vincentians were very concerned about the endemic poverty of Ethiopia and sought ways to confront not only the lack of education, skills and technology causing the poverty but also the religio/cultural/social attitudes undergirding its persistence. He became aware that Maryknoll was seeking opportunities for work in countries such as Ethiopia and began communication with the Maryknoll Regional Council in Africa. He explained that there were tremendous needs in Ethiopia which fulfilled Maryknoll's criteria for the new units. Additionally, there were new developments making this an opportune time for Maryknoll to go to Ethiopia. The government had recently indicated a sincere openness to receiving help from foreign missionary societies, especially in areas of social development. Furthermore, the government had become worried about growing Islamic influence in Ethiopia and consequently was ready to give greater freedom to Catholic missionaries to work in both Orthodox and indigenous areas. Although the government's new stance towards foreigners was more opportunistic than indicative of a real change of attitude, it still created possibilities for missionaries that previously did not exist, especially for non-Italians such as Americans. Many in the government still had very negative attitudes towards Italians and perceived the Catholic Church as an Italian Church.

Teuben also stated that collaboration with Orthodox clergy to bring about social and technological change in Ethiopia was not only desirable but absolutely indispensable. The Orthodox faith was totally co-joined with national self-identity and the Orthodox priests, despite their lack of education, were greatly respected by most people, particularly in rural areas. Through monasteries and Orthodox parishes, the clergy oversaw a rudimentary form of education in rural areas, something which could be built upon. Teuben also believed that the vast majority of Orthodox priests wanted to be better

trained and contribute to development of Ethiopian society. Thus, he recommended that a major component of new mission work should be in the training of Orthodox clergy.

The Orthodox Church had established a Development Commission with support and assistance from the World Council of Churches. Two select groups of clergy from all over the country had already participated in six-month courses in Addis Ababa, studying a variety of subjects, such as use of high-yield seeds, fertilizers and manure, measures to prevent soil erosion, the need for afforestation, digging of wells, building techniques, and the advantages of cooperative unions and literacy programs. The Church intended to expand this program to a one-year course for 1000 priests at a time until as many as possible were trained. To help accomplish this, the Orthodox Church was seeking highly-skilled technical trainers and financial assistance from abroad, especially from the United States.

To cooperate in this in 1971 Msgr. Teuben had started a multi-purpose training center in Nekemte, 200 miles west of Addis Ababa. This was a town of about fifteen thousand people and the capital of Wollega Province, a huge province of thirty thousand square miles and a population of two million (in 1973), of whom 0.2 percent were Catholic. The center was offering courses in home economics and adult literacy training, and running some youth programs. The Vicariate wished to expand the courses to training of women in income-earning skills, teaching peasant farmers modern agricultural methods, training for school dropouts, community development courses, and in-service training for government employees. It also wished to have a full-time youth center and offer study facilities for secondary school students. It was also hoped that the center could offer up-dating courses for clergy, both Catholic and Orthodox, in theology, scripture and social development. If there were sufficient personnel, especially those with the right knowledge, then the center could teach agricultural courses and tie these in with a fifty thousand acre resettlement scheme being run by one of the missionary priests. Furthermore, the government had targeted another five million acres on which it wished to resettle four hundred thousand households of farmers with some training, each to be given five hectares (twelve and a half acres). What the center needed was a Director, an Organizer, and other skilled staff. Teuben hoped that Maryknoll could supply the needed personnel.

In January, 1973, MM Fr. John Ridyard spent two weeks in Addis Ababa, primarily to attend a three-day seminar for Catholic Church personnel from all over the country organized by Msgr. Teuben. This seminar dealt with both church issues, such as liturgy, ecumenism, catechetics, clergy formation and the need for cooperation among all missionary and diocesan clergy, and societal matters, such as education, adult literacy, youth activities, medical care, socio-economic development and agriculture. While in Ethiopia Ridyard also took a trip out to Nekemte. After his visit he wrote a long report and a proposal that Maryknoll assign three priests and two OTP seminarians to the center in Nekemte. He had been working in Shinyanga, Tanzania, and on his return there he made plans to return to Ethiopia and take up residence in Addis Ababa, from where he could organize the construction and provisioning of the multi-purpose center.

There was no Catholic parish in Nekemte, but it had many advantages for the Maryknollers who would begin their new lives in Ethiopia in this town. It was situated six thousand feet above sea level, with a pleasant climate year-round, and an average of sixty inches of rain per year. Most modern houses had ready access to electricity and the

town water supply. The road to Addis Ababa was all weather, of which the first seventy miles from Addis were paved. The Orthodox Archbishop of Nekemte was very friendly and welcoming of Catholic missionaries willing to provide religious updating and education for social development. He expressly stated that he hoped the center could assist in religious education of Orthodox Christian youth and adults, and develop a program of upgrading the Orthodox clergy. In the town were one secondary school with 2500 students and two primary schools with a total of 4000 students. There was a definite need of in-service training of religious education teachers from these schools and other out-lying schools. These good opportunities made it necessary, however, to learn the Amharic language and something about Orthodox Christianity.

Ridyard returned to Ethiopia later in 1973 and took up residence in Addis Ababa, living first with the Vincentian Fathers, but later renting his own apartment. He stayed in Addis for two more years, till mid-1975, and proved to be invaluable in establishing personal relationships with the diplomatic community stationed in Addis, with officers of the many non-governmental organizations who were trying to assist the people of Ethiopia, and with important government officials. He did much of the organizational work in construction of the multi-purpose center in Nekemte, planning of the courses, and lining up of people who could do temporary teaching or training there. In addition, he became a pastor to the Catholics of the expatriate diplomatic community.

Unfortunately, he was not able to fulfill the high expectations he had created that a large influx of Maryknollers would soon be coming to Ethiopia, much to the growing chagrin of Msgr. Teuben and other Vincentians. Given the great need of someone with catechetical expertise, Fr. Mike Pierce had been requested to finish his assignment at Gaba Catechetical Center in Kampala, Uganda, and join the team at Nekemte. He had agreed and was even excited about the possibility of responding to the needs in Ethiopia, but in January, 1974, the Maryknoll General Council assigned him to Maryknoll, NY, to teach catechetics at the seminary and to be on the staff of the Continuing Education Department. In his place, though, two other Maryknollers did agree to go to Ethiopia: Fr. Bob Moore, who went in late 1973 to teach at the Catholic University in Asmara (Eritrea), and Fr. Ed Schoellmann, who was working in Shinyanga, Tanzania, and was able to begin in Ethiopia in mid-1974. Moore had to leave Asmara in 1974, however, when the new government nationalized the university. He went to Kenya to teach at Nairobi University.

The proposed increase of Maryknoll personnel in Ethiopia met another drawback with the change in Regional Superior and Regional Council in Africa in October, 1972, which had very different perspectives on Maryknoll priorities for Africa. Fr. James Morrissey, the new Regional Superior, had since 1954 done only pastoral ministry and only in Tanzania. Between 1969 and 1972 there had been a strong emphasis in the Africa Region to assign personnel to Kenya and now to Ethiopia. At the same time, Maryknoll priests were leaving the Dioceses of Musoma and Shinyanga for various reasons (not a few to leave the priesthood) and the Bishops of each Diocese were lobbying with Morrissey for more personnel. Additionally, in 1972 Bishop Rudin of Musoma Diocese wrote to the Maryknoll General Council stating that the contract between Maryknoll and the Diocese needed to be extended, for a number of reasons that both he and the Maryknoll priests in the diocese considered very important. Thus, in 1973 the two new priests and two OTP seminarians were assigned to Tanzania, and in 1974 of the three new

priests and two OTP seminarians, only newly ordained Fr. Dennis La Rouche was assigned to a place other than Tanzania, to Ethiopia. In fact, in the six years that Morrissey was Regional Superior, till October, 1978, no new priests or OTP seminarians were assigned to any other country except Tanzania, with the one exception of La Rouche to Ethiopia. During those years, of course, there were several older Maryknollers working in Tanzania who moved to Kenya, and a few to Ethiopia and Sudan. But it would not be until Kenya became a Region in 1979 that it began getting newly ordained priests, OTP candidates, and Brothers on first assignment to Africa. Regarding Ethiopia, Fr. Bill McIntire of the General Council stated:

Msgr. Teuben gets the impression that Morrissey and the Regional Council in Africa are not pushing work in Ethiopia very hard. A number of men in the Africa Region have expressed interest in going to Ethiopia and a half dozen or more have visited there in the last couple of years. I think Fr. Morrissey would really prefer that we set up work in Ethiopia from Maryknoll, NY, as an 'Ethiopian Unit of the Africa Region.' But unless we get strong backing on this from the region and willingness and encouragement to let those men who want to volunteer go, this is going to be difficult. Ethiopia represents an interesting and difficult missionary challenge. The question is whether Maryknoll wants this kind of challenge at this stage of our history.

In September, 1974, Schoellmann went to Addis Ababa to begin a five-month course in the Amharic language, followed shortly afterwards by La Rouche. Unfortunately, La Rouche left Ethiopia before he finished the course and returned to Maryknoll, NY. After a year in the U.S. he took an assignment to Western Samoa. No one was assigned to Ethiopia to replace him and since Ridyrd preferred to remain in Addis Ababa only Schoellmann went to live in Nekemte. He arrived in Nekemte on March 20, 1975, and began living in a rented house. At that time, Fr. Bill Galvin of the Mission Research and Planning Dept. of Maryknoll, NY, visited Nekemte and later sent a memo to the General Council strongly recommending that someone else be assigned to Nekemte with Schoellmann, but no one ever was.

In Nekemte in early 1975 there was only a small multi-purpose community center and Schoellmann's main work was in setting up and running youth programs. On property owned by the Vicariate of Jimma were four Comboni Sisters, running a medical clinic, a kindergarten, and teaching in primary school. Shortly after starting residence in Nekemte Schoellmann was joined by Fr. Henry Bomers, who was the Regional Superior of the Vincentian Fathers in Ethiopia. There was no parish in Nekemte, although there were two parishes about ten miles out of the city in opposite directions. It was not in his job description to do parish work, but Schoellmann and Bomers did do some parochial-style work. At the center they also began a program of updating the Orthodox clergy, including imparting some training in modern agricultural techniques. In June, 1975, three members of the Regional Council, Jim Morrissey, Ed Killackey and Bill Sweeney, visited Nekemte and extended Schoellmann's contract till the end of 1976.

By 1975, Ridyrd had become very well known in Addis Ababa. He had talked extensively with officials of various ministries, such as Community Development, Agriculture, and Education, about church cooperation with government projects. He

especially wanted to assist the government in land development projects in the Didessa Valley, a fertile area located along the river of the same name west and north of Nekemte. The valley is over 100 miles long and the river eventually flows into the Blue Nile about 100 miles northwest of Nekemte.

Ridyard had also arranged with the Georgetown School of Linguistics to finance remedial work for Coptic Orthodox priests to give them greater literacy in the national language Amharic. He had made very good relations with Orthodox Bishops, telling them that Maryknoll was not interested in proselytization but in making Orthodox Christians better Orthodox Christians.

In mid-1975 Ridyard was going on furlough and at that time the Regional Council decided that on his return to Ethiopia he should move out to Nekemte and plan on learning Amharic. In the meantime he should do formal study of the Orthodox Church and religion, so that on return to Ethiopia he could engage in full-time ministry with the Orthodox. However, on his return to the U.S. health problems reared up, directly connected with his tendency to put on excessive weight. He went on for programs to deal with this. In the end, he never returned to Ethiopia.

At the same time as Maryknoll was trying to begin ministry in Ethiopia, difficult even in the best of times, drastic change was underway in the Ethiopian government. In 1973, no one foresaw what was about to transpire, although no one was overly surprised that Selassie's rule was in danger, so anachronistic and autocratic his kingdom had become. In 1966 Selassie had tried to introduce a modern, progressive tax system (his second time to do so) and to register land, which would have strengthened peasant claims to land and weakened the landowners. The nobility in Gojjam revolted, and Selassie had to abandon his plans. This defiance emboldened other nobility and landowners to reject any progressive measures. In reaction to this, however, a coalition of groups, including Eritreans and Tigrayans fighting for independence, most of the country's educated people, who were influenced by Marxist teachings, and many of the peasants, joined forces to seek the overthrow of the government. From 1972 to 1974 there was a calamitous famine in Wollo Province that left 80,000 dead. Selassie was accused in popular opinion of being oblivious to their suffering, stoked by a television documentary called "The Invisible Famine." In 1973 the oil crisis caused a rapid spike in Ethiopia's gasoline prices, which spread through the costs of all imported and most locally produced goods. Anger against Selassie's government was tangible.

In early 1974 there were a series of mutinies by the military over the high cost of living and their low pay, which culminated with the establishment of the Armed Forces Coordinating Committee by Alem Zewde Tessema on March 23, 1974, in order to restore law and order. This committee was overthrown, however, on June 28th, because it was deemed to be too close to the nobility and the Selassie regime. The new group's formal name was the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army, but became more popularly known as the Derg. It was made up of privates or low ranking officers from forty units of the armed forces or other security strata, each with three representatives. Despite the legendary number of 120, in fact there were fewer than 110 members in the Derg and in subsequent years, as no new members were added and some of them were removed or killed, the number dropped even lower. The Derg remained in power up till 1987, when a new constitution was proclaimed and the country

renamed the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, although many Derg members retained positions in the new, ostensibly democratic government.

In 1974 and 1975 the Derg moved methodically to consolidate all power in the country. Major Haile Mariam Mengistu was named Chairman in June, 1974, and over the next two months the Derg arrested hundreds of military officers, government officials and regional governors. (In Wollega Province, there were four different Regional Governors in these two years, which had a direct effect on the church work in Nekemte.) On September 12th Haile Selassie was imprisoned and in November General Aman Andom, who had become temporary Chairman of the Derg and acting-head-of-state, was executed along with sixty other officials of the imperial government. In May, 1975, the monarchy was formally abolished and Marxism-Leninism declared the ideology of the state. On August 22, 1975, Selassie was assassinated in his dungeon, either on orders of Mengistu or directly by Mengistu himself. (The Derg claimed that he had died of natural causes, but few believe this. In 1992, Selassie's body was discovered deep below the prison, and in the year 2000 he received a royal burial from the Orthodox Church, which the government officially ignored.) Mengistu had by this time become one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Derg, but over the next two years he managed to get rid of his rivals and become sole Head of the Derg and de facto supreme leader of Ethiopia.

On March 4, 1975, the Derg announced the 'Land to the Tiller' policy, by which it nationalized all land in the country, abolished tenancy, and gave authority to the peasants to implement the new scheme. During that year most industries and urban private real-estate holdings were also nationalized. These measures were met with overwhelming approval by the Ethiopian people, although gradual awareness of the Derg's ruthlessness was growing. Ethiopia began receiving huge amounts of aid from the Soviet Union.

The Red Terror officially began in February, 1977, although throughout 1976 there were increasing rivalries and serious infighting within the Derg, and between the Derg and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and other civilian groups for control of Ethiopia. In September, 1976, many members of the EPRP were killed, after an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Mengistu. Then on February 3, 1977, Mengistu's forces prevailed in a bloody shoot-out to determine control of the Derg, when 58 of his rival Derg members were killed. Two other potential rivals survived, but immediately acquiesced to Mengistu's total control.

After this, Mengistu turned his attention to purging the EPRP, the civilian Political Bureau, and the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON). The Derg organized and armed groups of civilians, called *kebeles*, which went from house to house confiscating property and killing the residents. Much of this was just anarchic opportunistic theft. Ugly incidents followed in increasing brutality up till May Day, 1977, when the *kebeles* were ordered to round up any young people suspected to be members of the EPRP. Hundreds were gathered up, taken to three different places and executed. Estimates are that as many as 1000 were killed that day, including hundreds of university students – ironically the same ones who had acclaimed Mengistu after his 'Land to the Tiller' proclamation in 1975. The Derg claimed that it was the Political Bureau that was responsible for this massacre and by August of that year most people connected with the Bureau were also killed. Over the next two years hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians were rounded up and killed. Amnesty International estimates that there could have been

as many as 500,000 killed, of whom 1000 were children aged 11 to 13, whose bodies were left on the streets of Addis Ababa. Thousands of women were systematically raped, and in some cases people were killed by forcing them into churches which were then burnt to the ground.

In 1991 Mengistu was overthrown by a coalition of forces led by Tigrayans and Eritreans. On May 21, 1991, Mengistu went to the border of Kenya, purportedly to inspect troops, then fled through Kenya to Zimbabwe, where President Robert Mugabe gave him asylum. In 2006/07 Mengistu and 72 other officials of the Derg, some of whom were dead, were tried in Ethiopia either in person or in absentia and found guilty of genocide. They were sentenced to life imprisonment. On May 26, 2008, Mengistu and eighteen of his associates were sentenced by the Ethiopian Supreme Court to death. Sixteen of them are in prison in Ethiopia and the other two have been living in sanctuary in the Italian Embassy since 1991. However, Mugabe refuses to allow Mengistu to be taken to Ethiopia for punishment.

In theory the objectives of the overthrow of Haile Selassie were to improve the lives of the peasants and greatly improve agricultural production. In fact, due to corruption, the chaos erupting from the Derg's rule, and constant war against Eritrean forces fighting for independence, agriculture suffered. In 1984 the Derg forced all rural Ethiopians into agricultural communes and issued a ten-year plan, hoping to have six percent annual growth in agricultural and industrial production and a three percent growth of annual per capita income. In fact, per capita income declined by one percent per year during this time. Although drought is blamed for the catastrophic famine of 1984/85, historian Alex de Waal has pointed out that "closer investigation shows that widespread drought occurred only some months after the famine was already well underway." Other observers have theorized an additional allegation that the huge, worldwide famine relief efforts of 1984/85 had the unintended result of saving the Mengistu regime. It could not have survived if ten to twenty million people starved to death.

After the overthrow of the Derg in 1991, Meles Zenawi was elected President of Ethiopia in 1992 and in 1993 the people of Eritrea voted for independence in a referendum. Eritrea is led by Isaiiah Afwerki.

National events had a definite impact on missionary work in Ethiopia, although in the end none of the dire warnings of nationalization of schools, closure of churches and expulsion of all foreign missionaries came to pass. By 1975, though, most missionaries were worried, even fearful and depressed. It was difficult to start a new initiative, as missionaries had to presume the government would nationalize it. In Nekemte, at least in 1975 and 1976, Schoellmann and the others did not directly witness any atrocities, as the worst of it began only in 1977. Foreign missionaries stationed in Addis Ababa were not targeted by the Derg, but they shared in the horror and disgust at the irrational violence that engulfed the city and surrounding countryside. Some found conditions unacceptable and departed from the country. Hopes to assist peasant farmers with better agricultural methods and land resettlement were also dashed, as the government intended to implement rural change itself. It did not want any church help.

In June, 1975, three members of the Africa Regional Council visited both Ridyard and Schoellmann in Addis Ababa and Nekemte. In their letters to the Maryknoll General

Council and to each of the two priests they did not refer to the national situation at all. They recommended that each try to improve on what they had begun and do evaluations after each six months or so. They presumed that Ridyard would return to Ethiopia from his home leave sometime in 1976 and said that Schoellmann would stay in Nekemte until at least his home leave, due in late 1977. When they visited, Haile Selassie had been in prison for almost a year but was still alive, and very few if any atrocities had yet happened. The Derg government's land reform program was popular and it appeared that the only issue was which one of the Derg's leaders would become the ultimate supreme leader.

Joe Glynn visited in August, 1976, and by then matters had become much more tenuous. He began his report by saying, "Politically, conditions are unsettled. The changeover to a socialist state has been too abrupt. In-fighting in the army has resulted in general disorder within the country. China and Russia have moved into positions of influence and the propaganda of the media is anti-European and anti-white. The Italian community is leaving in large numbers."

After talking with Msgr. Teuben, he strongly recommended that Ridyard not return to Ethiopia and that Schoellmann plan on finishing up in December, 1976, almost a year earlier than originally planned. It was also recommended that Schoellmann not come back to Ethiopia for at least a year, by which time it will be seen what can be done. In fact, Schoellmann went to Kenya and researched possibilities of mission work in northern Kenya near Ethiopia, with Galla people very similar to the Oromo of Ethiopia. When the Italian Bishop of that diocese (Marsabit) turned down the Maryknoll proposal, Schoellmann took an assignment in Kisii in western Kenya.

This would not be the end of Maryknoll's presence in Ethiopia. In 1986, Fr. George Cotter, who had worked in Shinyanga, Tanzania, for many years, went on his own to Debre Zeyt, thirty miles southeast of Addis Ababa, to produce scriptural, catechetical and evangelical materials in the Oromo language. While in Shinyanga in the 1950s and 1960s he had become both intrigued by and knowledgeable of traditional African wisdom and the many proverbs Africans used to express this wisdom. He helped in the production of a book on Sukuma proverbs, which was seen as an aid to expatriate priests preaching the gospel. Later he collaborated with another priest from northern New York State in the production of a book that assists missionaries and volunteers in writing funding requests for projects in poor countries.

Thus, when he went to Ethiopia he already had skills in both book publishing and in the methodology of gathering tribal sayings and proverbs. Although his insistence on going to Ethiopia by himself was not at first accepted by Maryknoll leadership, he was able to use his own private sources of funding to put his plans into operation. He worked very hard and by 1990 had produced several books in the Oromo language. Some of his most important works are a book on Oromo Proverbs that compares them not only with sayings in the bible but also with proverbs in English and other languages; and the New Testament in the Oromo language. Cotter worked at first in English, using local Oromo men and women as language informants and interpreters. He eventually developed a great understanding of the Oromo language, but always depended on informants for the final result. Cotter's genius was in developing the methodology that enabled the interpreters to understand the objectives of the particular book being written.

Through Cotter's relationships with the Ethiopian Catholic Church, the new bishop of the diocese located in the Rift Valley 100 miles east of Addis Ababa issued an invitation to a visiting Maryknoller in 1991 that Maryknoll take a parish in the southern part of his diocese. It would have been located in the mountains east of the Rift Valley, in south-central Ethiopia, 300 to 400 miles from Addis Ababa. This was the Awasa area to which Maryknoll had been invited in 1979. There was a large group of indigenous people there and some had already become Catholic, even if a minority of the population. The Bishop said that there were very good prospects for evangelization, for doing good catechetical and pastoral work, and for assisting very poor people with development. In 1991 the Derg had been overthrown and it would not have been difficult to receive permission to work in this area, albeit as development specialists rather than religious missionaries. This would have been a very challenging mission assignment, requiring probably both the Amhara and Oromo languages. By 1991, Maryknoll's vocation picture was making it difficult to accept assignments in completely new areas. The visitor relayed this invitation but it never received any serious consideration by Maryknoll.

Cotter continued working on Oromo books up till the new millennium, producing fifteen books in all. After the year 2000, even though he was retired, he continued to reside in Ethiopia for part of the year. In 2008, health problems forced him to return permanently to live in the United States.

One other Maryknoller also worked in Ethiopia, Fr. Dick Baker, who went to Gambela in far western Ethiopia in 1996 to work with Sudanese refugees, and in 2009 to northwestern Ethiopia to work in an area populated by a small indigenous ethnic group, called the Gamuz. These two assignments are covered in Part Seven.

Juba, Sudan

"Having passed through the Sudan, hell hath no fear for me." Writer/traveler Ewart Grogan spoke these words in the nineteenth century.

A Maryknoll group of three priests, Africa Regional Superior James Morrissey, and two from the Mission Research and Planning Department at Maryknoll, NY, Bill Galvin and Phil Wallace, visited Sudan for three weeks in March, 1975, and felt that not much had changed, at least in southern Sudan, in the intervening 100 years. They went there to investigate possibilities for Maryknoll mission work and wrote:

The Sudan. A land of one million square miles (two and a half million square kilometers), the largest country in Africa. A land fought over for more than 100 years, caught between Egypt in the north and Zanzibar and the East African countries to its south. A land that is a barrier between the Arab peoples of Islam faith in the north and the Nilotic tribes of Christian faith and traditional beliefs in the south. A land that finally achieved independence in 1956, only to wage a bloody civil war for sixteen years in which a million reportedly died, before a tentative unity and peace was established in 1972. A land that has boasted it could provide forty percent of the world's food if properly irrigated, yet a dry arid land. Not the Third World or even the Fourth but perhaps a Fifth World in terms of development. Ranked among the twenty poorest countries in the world by the UN.

In a sense, the Sudan is two nations. The north extending over two thirds of the land mass, with its capital at Khartoum and its people Arabic and Moslem, dominating the government. In stark contrast is Southern Sudan, comprising three provinces – Equatoria, Upper Nile and Bahr El Ghazal – with its capital at Juba and its people Christian and animist, living for the most part in the bush, as they have for centuries.

In the 1890s the European powers were engaged in the colonial scramble for Africa, dividing up the continent into territories and full-fledged colonies without regard for centuries-old tribal boundaries. In 1898 Britain sent Lord Kitchener to Sudan, primarily to take control of the whole length of the Nile River. In 1899 Britain and Egypt formed the Condominium to govern Sudan as a territory, although it was Britain alone that made all major decisions regarding Sudan.

Sudan was ruled as one entity, although north and south were administered as separate territories. Islam was forbidden in the south, which was essentially neglected by the British. Britain concentrated infrastructure improvements and political development solely in the north. In the 1940s, as Britain began preparing Sudan for independence, the original intention was to give the north and south separate independence. In 1946, however, Britain changed its policy and stated that the south would be under a united authority centered in Khartoum. Southerners felt betrayed by the British. When self-rule came in 1953 Arabic was declared the national language and of the eight hundred civil service positions available southerners obtained only four. Sudan became independent on January 1, 1956, and the United States was one of the first countries to recognize independent Sudan.

It was the northern decision in to renege on their agreement to establish a federal constitution that led southern military officers to revolt in 1955 and start the first civil war. This war lasted until the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of 1972, signed for the north by Colonel Gaafar Nimeiry, who had come to power on May 25, 1969, in a coup d'état. Although his rule was less hostile to Christian/Animist southern Sudanese, social arabization of the south continued. His decision to promote mechanized export agriculture, at the instigation of the Europe and the U.S., caused enormous economic and social problems for pastoralist peoples, not only in the south but also in the north, especially Darfur.

The Verona Fathers (and Brothers and Sisters) from Italy had gone to Sudan in the middle of the nineteenth century and at the time of Sudan's Independence there were over 300 Verona priests in Sudan, 200 in the five dioceses of the south. Because of the southern revolt in 1955 the Khartoum government harassed Catholic Church personnel mercilessly for ten years, which culminated in 1964 with the expulsion of all expatriate Catholic and Protestant missionaries from the south. After the peace agreement of 1972 priests and Sisters slowly began returning to Sudan, but in 1975 there were only 69 priests in the south, of whom only six were non-Sudanese.

During the civil war all schools were closed in the south, people fled from the towns, which had become practically deserted, and the sixty Verona missions were severely damaged or destroyed. About one million people were killed, 500,000 became refugees in other countries, and the rest of the people fled deep into the bush where there were no services of any kind. There had been only one bishop for all five dioceses during

that time, Archbishop Ireneo Dud of Juba, and only six priests (all Sudanese), who experienced periodic persecutions.

In 1975 matters had returned to some normalcy, due to Nimeiry's fair policies, and the Church was being re-established. The population of Juba had grown from less than 5000 in 1969 to 37,000 in 1975, and Wau, 500 miles to the northwest of Juba, had about 30,000. The Maryknoll visitors were given three possibilities for work in southern Sudan, two of which were in Wau, to staff the major seminary and/or staff a technical school, which were turned down due to the isolation, heat and hardships of that place. The third proposal, to begin a National Catechetical Pastoral Center in Juba, was accepted and the Maryknoll General Council was requested to seek personnel with the requisite skills to staff the center. The recommendation was that there be at least three priests/Brothers, all experienced missionaries, at least one of whom had experience in Africa, and who had the personal and spiritual qualities to endure the hardships of southern Sudan. They were to form a new Unit, under the Maryknoll General Council, within the Africa Region.

Although the physical challenges of Juba were not as extreme as Wau, it would definitely not be a country-club type of assignment. Juba is located on the Nile River slightly less than 100 miles north of the Ugandan border, at about 5 degrees north of the equator. Climate in the equatorial zone is due less to distance from the equator than to altitude. Whereas Kampala, Uganda, right on the equator, has a warm but pleasant climate, Juba is unbearably hot and humid for much of the year, even if not technically a desert. It had no social or cultural outlets, few newspapers and radio stations, no television station, and no theatres. Roads were terrible and at times impassable. Relatively few spoke English and it would be necessary to learn the spoken form of Arabic (classic Arabic was not necessary, but eventually became very helpful for anyone wishing to stay in the country for many years). The people were traumatized and some were depressed. The isolation of southern Sudan combined with its harsh physical, social and psychological characteristics made it imperative that the missionaries be well-grounded and prepared for a difficult mission. The three Maryknoll visitors strongly recommended that young Lay Missioners not be assigned to Sudan at this time, due primarily to its social isolation.

Apparently, this was exactly what Joe Glynn, who served on the Maryknoll General Council from 1972 to 1978, was looking for. He set the responsibility on himself to recruit Maryknollers who would be willing to respond to a challenging mission.

In mid-1975 Fr. Bill Knipe had been working in Burnt Forest Parish in Eldoret, Kenya, for three years, an assignment he enjoyed and expected to continue for several more years. As he tells it, "One Sunday morning, as I was finishing saying the parish Mass, I looked out the church window and saw Joe Glynn, who was on the General Council in New York, driving into our driveway. After Mass, we sat and had a cup of coffee, and he said to me, 'We're asking you to volunteer for a new project in Sudan.' He also mentioned the names of others who would be involved, Frs. John Conway and Tom Mantica, plus several Maryknoll Sisters." Knipe had never given any thought about working in Sudan, although he would end up spending most of the next two decades there. He narrated Glynn's invitation as follows:

Glynn said that all he was asking from me was ‘a statement of interest.’ I asked him what this meant and he said that ‘if the Society agrees to undertake this project and fund it, then you will be interested in considering it.’ I said that if that is all it means, then I will give a statement of interest.

A month later I was home in Long Island on furlough where I received a letter from the General Council informing me that I had been officially assigned to Sudan and thanking me for accepting this assignment! The statement of interest was misinterpreted into a commitment to Sudan.

But that was okay. I was open to that. Tom Mantica, on the other hand, fought it all the way. He didn’t want to leave Japan and he didn’t want to go to Sudan.

Mantica, whose expertise in the education and training of children in Japan was seen as essential for the new work in Sudan, eventually succumbed to the pressure from the General Council. Knipe had also been a teacher in the U.S., at the Maryknoll Seminary in Glen Ellyn, and Conway, a former Christian Brother, was a trained teacher. Because the new apostolate in Juba would be in education, these three Maryknoll priests had exactly the skills needed. Furthermore, two of them had at least six years experience in East Africa. Two Maryknoll Sisters had also been recruited, Ruth Greble who was head of the Sisters College in New York, and Lucille Fandel who had been working in Guatemala. They were gung-ho for the Sudan.

Conway was immediately intrigued by the mission to Sudan and readily agreed to join the Unit. He had come to East Africa in 1963 as a De La Salle Christian Brother, working first in Moshi, Tanzania, for one year. In 1964 he joined three other Christian Brothers to take charge of the newly founded Mara Secondary School in Musoma, at the invitation of Bishop John Rudin. He taught there for five years, and said, “I was always impressed with the welcoming spirit of the Maryknoll priests and Brothers, their great facility in local languages, and holistic involvement in the lives of the people.” In June, 1969, he petitioned the Brothers to seek ordination as a Maryknoll priest, which came to fruition in May, 1973. In the intervening four years he obtained his Masters Degree in Theology in New York, and took a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) course while at the novitiate in Hingham, MA. In 1971 he went on Overseas Training Program (OTP) to Nyegina Parish on the outskirts of Musoma, learning Swahili and pastoral work. He also became greatly involved in direct evangelization in the parish and the outstations, and in the adult education program of the Tanzanian government. These various educational skills, plus his years teaching, were soon to be viewed as critical for the new Maryknoll apostolate in Sudan, setting up a national catechetical institute.

After ordination Conway returned to Nyegina Parish as pastor for two years. In May, 1975, Joe Glynn came to Musoma, and relayed the General Council’s desire to start a new mission in Sudan. Conway immediately volunteered, and was in fact the first to go to Sudan, taking a trip through southern Sudan before returning to New York. He met with Archbishop Dud of Juba, and stayed at the Bishop’s residence for a short while, trying to do some preliminary investigation about the pastoral institute. Unfortunately, he came down with hepatitis at that time and was very sick. He went to Khartoum and then flew to New York, but due to his illness he missed the month-long orientation that the others had at Maryknoll, NY.

Conway explains that “this was a series of training meetings for the new Units. The Unit structure was new in Maryknoll at that time, and these meetings were needed to understand this new structure. The teams going to Nepal and Bangladesh were also at these meetings. These were team-building meetings, to develop team skills, cooperative skills and a sense of collaboration.” Facilitators helped each Unit in this task.

After the seminars on the Unit structure were completed at the end of 1975 the team was ready to travel to Sudan. However, as visas were slow in coming, they went to Cairo, Egypt, in January, 1976, to begin the study of Arabic. They studied colloquial Arabic at American University, and classical Arabic at a college run by Christian Brothers. They also made use of this time to visit some of the historical and archeological places in Egypt. Finally, in September, 1976, the visas came through, and they flew to Khartoum. This time, though, it was Knipe who came down with hepatitis. He was flown to Nairobi to recover and remained there until February, 1977. He missed the exceedingly disorganized entry to Sudan that the others had to endure.

The first incident happened when Conway, Mantica, and Sisters Ruth and Lucille arrived at Khartoum Airport. They were met by a high-powered ecclesial group led by Archbishop Augustino Baroni of Khartoum, who welcomed them with the words, “Welcome to the Maryknoll Printing Team!” Mantica’s sensitivities were piqued, and he immediately asked what was meant by this. Archbishop Baroni explained that Glynn was buying a half million dollar printing press in Germany for the church in Sudan and had arranged to have a team of people come to do the printing.

Mantica went directly to a phone and called Superior General Ray Hill, who was in Rome at that time. He told Hill to cancel the shipment of the printing press and to inform Archbishop Dud of Juba that the Maryknollers were coming to do pastoral work, starting a new national pastoral and catechetical institute. Hill agreed to this, as he realized that the team would otherwise have reneged on their agreement to work in Sudan. Thus, the first hurdle was passed.

A second obstacle was a green monkey disease in southern Sudan that obligated the team to remain in Khartoum for two months. Finally, in late 1976 they went to Juba, only to encounter a third frustrating encumbrance: no preparations had been made for their arrival. The house they were given was in extremely bad condition, and it took several difficult months to bring in all the construction materials to fix up the residences and build the buildings needed for the pastoral institute. During that time, Conway and the two Sisters lived together in one small house with only one bathroom. Conway later commented, “Ruth and Lucille found this very unusual, to put it mildly.” But eventually, in early 1977, the institute was ready.

The most crucial group that the institute, called Palica (for PASTORAL LITURGICAL CATECHETICAL) PASTORAL INSTITUTE, focused on was the 300 catechists from the five dioceses of southern Sudan. Despite the common belief that the south is predominantly Christian, in 1975 there were four million people in the three provinces of whom only a half million were Catholic and three million were practicing traditional animist beliefs. There were only 100,000 Moslems and about 250,000 Protestants. There were great opportunities for conversion to Catholicism, but in 1974 only 400 adults were baptized in all five dioceses. Catechists concentrated on preparation of school children for first communion or of some for baptism. The primary goal of the institute was to upgrade catechists to be able to engage in good adult catechesis in addition to teaching children. Dioceses would follow

up with payment of a monthly stipend to each trained catechist, funding for which would come from the Church in Europe.

In addition to catechists' courses, the institute would also have on-going seminars for local priests and Sisters, short in-service courses for government religious education teachers, formation of lay leaders from parishes, and organize retreats for all the different church personnel. Additional goals for the institute included providing parishes with religious books and other educational aids, helping in translation of religious books – especially the bible – into select local languages, and initiating a study of pastoral problems, local culture and ways to inculturate the liturgy.

Most people in southern Sudan are Nilotic but the number of Nilotic ethnic groups complicated attempts to use a local language. The largest ethnic group is the Dinka and theirs was the logical choice for inculturation attempts in Juba. However, the Maryknollers who worked in Juba worked only in English, or with a combination of English and Arabic. Two Sudanese priests were at GABA Catechetical Institute in Eldoret, Kenya, and on their return to Juba they joined Palica Institute which enabled it to incorporate Nilotic customs and language into course content.

The institute functioned very well for the five years that Maryknollers were there. Knipe put in a tremendous effort in learning Arabic, both colloquial and classical, becoming skilled in both. Conway and Mantica led retreats for the diocesan priests of Sudan at Wau. Knipe says, "As the years went on we began to recruit Sudanese personnel, priests and Sisters, to join the staff or be periodic adjunct staff."

These were the years between the two civil wars in Sudan, the 1954 to 1972 war and later the 1983 to 2005 war, both between the Nilotic, Christian south, led by the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), and the Arab, Muslim government centered in Khartoum in the north. The wars were fought for southern independence, although the peace agreements offered only autonomy to the south. Other issues of contention were southern opposition to Sharia Law and control of southern Sudan's large deposits of oil, which the Khartoum-based government hoped to retain control over. Southern Sudan also has great agricultural potential. It is the wars that have so disrupted the lives of the Nilotic peoples of the south as to prevent them from being able to benefit from the great potential of their own area. But while the Maryknollers were in Juba from 1976 to 1983, there was peace in the sense of a lack of military conflict. However, the Arab government was always trying to force Arab culture and language on the whole country, and especially in Juba.

Knipe, who had a very good experience of church in Eldoret, Kenya, later reflected on the conditions in Sudan.

The Church in Sudan was in a depleted, devitalized state. The people were just practicing survival. Priests and Sisters were trying to merely get enough money to buy food and clothing and to have a somewhat decent house. I never personally witnessed war, but saw the results: destruction of convents and churches; missions I visited where priests and Sisters were living in bombed out buildings, sleeping on floors; no water systems, no toilets, no electricity; waking up in the morning and just trying to get through the day.

I knew that I had come to a country that really needed help and therefore our presence with them was very important. I couldn't think of a place that was

more needy than the Sudan. Church leaders were leading lives of sacrifice. Yet they were happy, laughing, smiling, friendly and very generous.

The people were fantastic. How they remained faithful, how they remained believers, I'll never understand. But they were very firm and ready to die for the faith all over Sudan. It was an uninformed faith, but a real faith. They didn't know the catechism, nor the New Testament, but they believed in Jesus and were going to die for him, and for the Blessed Mother. Those of us who were in Sudan, we all took heart from the example of the Sudanese, laity and clergy. The more they were beaten down, the more they were persecuted, the stronger they were in affirming their faith. 'I will die for the faith; they will never get me to become Muslim,' they said. While I was in Tanzania and Kenya, both places were peaceful. In the Sudan, though, the Christian people had been forced to choose between following Christ or selling out to Islam, and they wouldn't do it.

The combination of the climatic conditions, personal adjustment difficulties, and one very tragic event, took a toll on the Maryknoll presence there. At the end of 1977 Conway resigned from the Unit, saying that he was having difficulty properly adjusting, although he had made a great contribution in his one year there. Less than half a year later the Unit was struck with one of the most tragic incidents in Maryknoll history, the death of Tom Mantica in a plane crash flying from Juba to Khartoum on April 28, 1978. He was on his way to South America as Unit representative for a pre-chapter meeting. Joe Glynn was so shaken by his sudden death that he flew immediately to Sudan to take the body back to the U.S. That left Knipe alone among the Maryknoll Fathers. Superior General Ray Hill came out, and both he and Knipe went to Malakal where the plane crashed, to personally witness the site and take photos. Hill offered Knipe support, and told him not to worry about the need to keep up with Maryknoll administrative matters.

In 1978 Fr. Tom Keefe came to Juba to replace Mantica. He had worked in Shinyanga, Tanzania, for many years and then worked at the major seminary in New York and the novitiate in Massachusetts. Unfortunately, he too found conditions very difficult in Juba, especially the heat, and after a year and a half moved to Kenya. Joe Glynn, who had finished up on the General Council, came to Juba in late 1979, and was there for four years. Glynn claimed that he never really got into any significant work in Juba (he never learned Arabic), although he spent his whole time visiting and talking with people, making extremely good relations with church people, and generally being a rock of support to people living in very trying conditions. He commented about life and work in Sudan.

Southern Sudan was a nice area, hot but pleasant in many ways. People were very nice, but you could see the tensions that the Africans were living with under a Muslim government. Sudan was very different type work than what we had been accustomed to in Tanzania.

Archbishop Dud, whom our men first worked under in Juba, had been the first Sudanese priest ordained and the first African Bishop in Sudan. Over the years he experienced a lot of stress under the Muslim government, but he was a kind, prayerful man, which enabled him to survive. Many priests in southern Sudan had been ordained in Uganda and the war and subsequent persecution

forced them to flee back to Uganda. Later he retired (and passed away in the 1980s) and was temporarily replaced by Monsignor Paolino Dougale, a Comboni (i.e. Verona) Father who was pastor of a big parish in Juba, as Administrator of the diocese. He too had a hard time with the Muslims and was actually imprisoned once for a period of time for speaking out against the Muslim form of government (Sharia) and its treatment of southern Sudanese people. He too has since died, but was very respected by the clergy and the people. After that Paulino Lukudu Loro became Archbishop in Juba. He is originally from Juba, but had been made Bishop in El Obeid, and then was moved back to Juba. Another Bishop in the south, Paride Taban in Torit, was also persecuted by the government and later put in detention by the Sadiq Al Mahdi government. So the Church in southern Sudan has had a hard time.

At the end of 1981, Knipe informed the Sudanese Bishops' Council that the five-year period for Maryknoll to run the pastoral institute had finished. He formally turned it over to the Bishops, and a month or two later he moved to El Obeid, in northern Sudan. This was at the invitation of Bishop Macram Max Gassis of El Obeid, to teach in a diocesan secondary school run by the Comboni Fathers. He remained there three years, teaching, saying Mass in Arabic at the cathedral, and doing even more intense Arabic studies. He has reflected that "these were three beautiful years, living with the Combonis. We had a wonderful community life, a lot of fun playing cards, drinking wine, and talking."

One other Maryknoll priest came briefly to Juba in the early 1980s, Father Jack Quinn. His assignment to Sudan was actually an unplanned and unexpected decision. After working in Tanzania for eight years, serious heart problems forced him back to the U.S. After quadruple bypass surgery, he was able to return to East Africa in 1980, but went to Nairobi, Kenya, where in theory he would have good living conditions and no travel on rugged roads. He began work with the Apostles of Jesus (cf Part Three), an assignment which ironically entailed him traveling to four countries, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Sudan, where the seminarians came from. Quinn explained, "The Apostles of Jesus originally started in Uganda with refugees from Sudan, then spread to Tanzania and Kenya. In 1981, it came full circle, as they were opening a seminary in Sudan for refugees from Uganda. I traveled there and immediately thought that was where the greatest need was. So I asked for a three year assignment to Juba." When he got there Bill Knipe was in the process of finishing up at the pastoral centre and moving to El Obeid. Thus, only Glynn and Quinn remained in Juba.

At first Quinn was at a place called Rejaf with the Apostles of Jesus while a seminary was being built. According to Quinn, "Rejaf was on an elevation, so we had a nice breeze at times. In any event I like heat, so enjoyed this place. Conditions were very rugged in the beginning, but eventually a good set of buildings were built. The Combonis know how to build in the tropics. After a year or so, I moved into Juba with Joe Glynn."

Quinn talked about a few of the efforts they made: "We had a small house in Juba, and we started a storefront church, which was nice. I also worked with the Shiloh Sisters. We tried to get a property next to Juba University to build a church, but due to Muslim political influence we never got it. So we were limited in what we could do."

In 1983, Glynn was elected Regional Superior of Kenya, which included the personnel in Sudan, and he moved to Nairobi. That same year, Knipe was requested by the General Council to take over the Mission Research and Planning Department (MRPD) at Maryknoll, NY, from Fr. Clancy Engler. Quinn thought the Church was too concentrated in Juba, and tried to move out from the city to a place called Kwirijik with an American Comboni priest, Fr. Mike Bombarton. They managed to build a chapel, which was later destroyed by the SPLA, but Quinn's stay there was brief. The Kenya Regional Council did not approve of this move by Quinn, and in 1984 he returned to Nairobi. Thus ended the first stint for Maryknoll in Sudan. However, in 1987 three other Maryknollers went to El Obeid to learn Arabic, accompanied by Knipe and Glynn who opted to return to Sudan, also to El Obeid. More will be said about this below.

The Maryknoll Sisters, Ruth and Lucille, stayed on in Juba. Over the years they have been joined by other Maryknoll Sisters in southern Sudan, although not in Juba.

It is unfortunate that Jim Morrissey was never interviewed for the Maryknoll history project, since it was during his two terms, six years in all, that so many monumental changes in Maryknoll's work in Africa took place. Thus, we do not know his own opinions of these changes and moves. Even though he lived in Nairobi he was still the Regional Superior for close to 100 Maryknollers in Tanzania, which included Dar es Salaam in addition to Musoma and Shinyanga. It was in the 1970s that priests were leaving the priesthood, for marriage or other reasons, an excruciating ordeal for a superior. He also had responsibility for the Maryknollers in Kenya and not long into his term he became aware that there were fundamental misunderstandings between the Maryknollers and the Bishops in two of the three dioceses where Maryknoll was working in Kenya. And despite the challenges of the move into Kenya he was beginning in 1974 to oversee moves by Maryknoll to Ethiopia, Sudan, and in 1976 to Zambia. Morrissey always had a great sense of humor, but it is very likely that he felt periods of stress during his years as Regional Superior. It is only when looking back at those six years that one realizes how radically Maryknoll's mission presence in Africa was changed – and in a relatively short period of time.

Turkana Apostolate, Lodwar Diocese, Kenya

By the end of 1976 Fr. Joe Morris had been working in Kebirigo Parish in Kisii, Kenya, for six years, and had learned the Kisii language well. Since 1972 he had been studying the Chapter documents and constantly reading and listening to Maryknoll explanations of the new directions in which the society should move. He characterized them as, "Our role is no longer to be pastors or in charge of a place, whether parish or other institution. The African church and clergy are now coming into their own, and we should be under African pastors, assisting them in their work." He also felt that the rectory in Kebirigo was too nice, which may possibly have been true in the early 1970s. A visitor to this parish today would not consider the rectory grandiose, and possibly not even nice. He further stated, "In my opinion, our role is to merely live with the people, in the same economic standard in which they do. African priests are going to follow, and as much as possible we should not do anything that requires a large infusion of American funding that African priests will not have access to."

So he was already seriously discerning a change, and in 1976 an opportunity presented itself. “Maryknoll was asking for volunteers to take on new commitments, learn new languages, and work primarily with non-Christians in a model of mission called pre-evangelization.” In 1977, he joined a group with two others, Frs. George Putnam and Ed Schoellmann. The latter had just come down from Ethiopia. At first they thought they might be starting a new mission in Zambia, but that did not come to fruition at that time. Shortly afterwards, Putnam dropped out of the group and became a teacher at the national seminary in Nairobi. Thus later in 1977, Morris and Schoellmann went to Marsabit in north-central Kenya for one month to research the area and possibilities. Kenya’s northern frontier is predominantly arid, and includes the inhospitable Cholbe Desert, one of the hottest, most arid places on Earth. The people are the Gabbra and Rendille peoples, who are similar to Oromo of southern Ethiopia, and markedly different from the Bantu of central Kenya. The Diocese of Marsabit was and still is staffed by Consolata priests, who hail from Italy. The two Maryknollers issued a report of work possibilities to the Bishop of Marsabit, but in the end he turned down their request. This happened at a meeting of the Consolata priests of the diocese, at which they reportedly said that the diocese didn’t need more priests. More likely it was realized that the Maryknoll and Consolata charisms and modes of working are radically different.

As a result, Schoellmann also dropped out of the group and took an assignment at Gekano Parish in Kisii. Morris then went to the Diocese of Lodwar in northwestern Kenya, which is populated almost exclusively by the nomadic Turkana people, a Nilotic group with some Cushitic influences. The language, though, is classified as Nilotic. Lodwar District is likewise very arid and hot, as is all of northern and northeastern Kenya (three-quarters of Kenya is arid or semi-arid). The diocese is run by the Irish Kiltegan Fathers. Bishop John Mahon welcomed Morris, and in early 1978 Morris moved from Kibirigo to Lodwar.

His first task was to learn the Turkana language. A priest who had taught some other Kiltegan priests Turkana was unfortunately not available, so Morris had to learn it on his own. He had a grammar book, and used a Turkana informant who turned out to be very helpful. To do language learning he went to the northernmost parish in Lodwar, at a tiny village called Lokitong.

Lokitong is a hot, desolate place only about thirty miles from the border with Ethiopia and Sudan. A seasonal river runs through the village, although it is usually dry. However, water under the river gives the village an oasis-like quality, and many thorn trees grow next to the river. This is the village where Jomo Kenyatta and other purported leaders of the Mau Mau movement had been detained in the 1950s, since it is about as far as one can get from Nairobi while still remaining in Kenya. It is a half-day’s drive just from Lodwar, through an inhospitable desert, and only if the road is passable. In the 1950s escape from Lokitong was deemed inconceivable and Kenyatta and the others were free to walk around the small village. In 1978, local Turkana liked showing the occasional visitor the small, inauspicious house where Kenyatta lived – the village’s only tourist spot. Lokitong was also only fifteen miles from Lake Turkana, but through a rocky gorge that even a good Land Rover had great difficulty passing. Although most Turkana are nomadic pastoralists – in Lokitong the one-humped camel is the domestic animal of both choice and necessity – those living next to Lake Turkana survive by fishing.

When Morris arrived in Lokitong the pastor was away at the Kiltegan Chapter, but another young Kiltegan who had just finished the language course was there, and he too was very helpful to Morris. Morris spent daytime hours in language learning, and in the evening he and the other priest would go to the communities located only one or two kilometers from the town center to say Mass or just visit the people.

Morris' primary goal was to live with and do some form of evangelization with traditional Turkana still engaged in a nomadic mode of existence. Lokitong gave him that chance. It was a pleasant place to live in Morris' first year in Turkana, as there was more rain than normal. Although hot and dry, with a stark landscape, the parish was on top of a small hill that caught a constant breeze tempering the heat. The Turkana there were almost untouched by modernity, the precise quality Morris was seeking and appreciated finding. Lokitong Parish ran several schools, including two in the Liwano Triangle of southeastern Sudan that was administered by Kenya. Morris decided that those schools gave him the opportunity to live among the Turkana. He purchased a large tent, which he used to leave at a particular school compound for one to three months. His mode of operation was to stay in the tent from Monday to Saturday, and then come back to Lokitong on Saturday evening to help with parish Masses.

During this time two priests who were at Lokitong moved to the parish at Lake Turkana, called Lorinak, and Morris was alone in the parish for a while. Fortunately there were Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) Sisters in the parish, one of whom was doing pastoral work. This enabled Morris to continue to be a weekend pastor, and stay in the outlying areas the rest of the week.

In 1979 the diocese organized a major meeting with the nomads, to inform them that the diocese was going to discontinue traditional forms of parochial work, including building schools, and instead reach out in dialogue to nomads from within their nomadic way of life. Every month for at least one week at a time four or five priests along with several Turkana catechists from each mission went to a place called Anau, to meet with Turkana elders. The purpose was to learn the Turkana form of religion – e.g. how they prayed, their symbols and important customs, what was ethically most important for them, and the mechanisms they had to ensure that equality would be maintained. Morris was still learning Turkana at that time, but through the meetings he not only advanced his language abilities but learned many cultural attributes and values that Turkana people cherish.

Morris also went alone to another place where he established a very good relationship with a Turkana elder, by the name of Lakabii, who was considered wealthy by Turkana standards (he had large herds and several wives). Through him, Morris was able to meet all the members of a number of families, and explain why he was so eager to come and live among them, and learn their way of life. This particular group of Turkana was benefiting from two years of above average rainfall, had huge herds of goats and cattle, and more than enough food. It was a perfect example of pristine African self-reliance. They in return looked on Morris as an interesting exotic specimen and accepted his presence. But they had some rules, as Morris explained, "Come but never live under a tree. Never build a house that you're going to live in. Bring us medicines, but never build a house that you're going to put the medicine in." Morris also said that in their prayers "they would pray that this government, this government of houses, would go away and leave them alone." Morris assured them that he had no intention of building anything

permanent. Thus went a fulfilling year and a half of learning about the Turkana and their nomadic way of life.

In June of 1979 the drought began. In Kitale, Kenya's breadbasket for grain products, the crops failed. There was no rain in Kitale nor in Turkana for a full nine months. In Turkana this was compounded by a disease that wiped out goats and affected other animals. Turkana herds were being rapidly depleted yet the Kenya government issued an order forbidding transport of maize to Turkana. As a result the only food in Turkana was meat, and the supply was constantly dwindling. The first step taken by the missionaries in Lokitong was to request milk assistance from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for distribution to young children.

By mid-1980 the food shortage had become severe. Morris told the following tale, "The Swiss Caritas organization had donated a large quantity of food for Lodwar Diocese, which was stored in Kitale, but the District Commissioner (DC) of Lodwar inexplicably refused to permit its transport to Lodwar. The Bishop, through contacts, was able to get letters from the President's office ordering the shipment, but when the Bishop and his assistants went to get the maize it had already disappeared." This was merely the first corrupt misuse of food assistance that the missionaries would encounter.

By the beginning of 1981 the famine had hit Turkana hard. In Lokitong there were two feeding stations, each providing cooked bulgur wheat from CRS to 4000 children. Tragically, an outbreak of both measles and cholera occurred in one of the camps, killing scores of children. The MMM Sisters tried their best, but the medical supplies in distant Lokitong were too meager.

Morris related another anecdote that showed how difficult it was to get aid for the Turkana.

The newly elected Member of Parliament in north Turkana wrote to President Moi, informing him of starvation in Turkana, and requested a meeting. The President never responded. Thus the MP gave a press conference in Parliament, stating what was happening. The headlines in the next day's paper were, 'People in Turkana are dying.'

That very day the MP was arrested by police and taken to the draconian torture chambers of Nyati House in Nairobi. After lengthy interrogations about why he would announce such a thing, he was taken to the President's office. Moi poked his walking stick constantly in the MP's chest, all the while haranguing him for hurting Kenya's reputation. A delegation was sent from Parliament to Turkana District and came back to report to the newspapers that 'there is no starvation anywhere in Kenya!'

Bishop Mahon of Lodwar wrote to many organizations, and finally the European Economic Commission (EEC), as it was called in those days, went to investigate. They were appalled at the conditions, and responded in a comprehensive way. In addition to food relief, the EEC decided that the Turkana would also need rehabilitation assistance, a decision that directly affected Morris' work.

The Turkana Rehabilitation Program (TRP) was begun, a program that lasted for years. Kiltegan Father Leo Trainor was made manager, as he had organized development

education programs several years earlier. As Lokitong was one of the primary areas where the program was to take place, Trainor asked Morris to engage in development education there, trying to elicit from the people themselves how the program should be implemented. For the next two years, this consumed much of Morris' time. He was the leader of a team made up of five Turkana men, which shortly expanded to two teams, the second led by Morris' assistant in the first team, with whom he met every week. As the DC in Lodwar had insisted that people live in camps in order to be given relief food, the teams' task was to go round to each camp to meet with camp leaders who were called Site Facilitators. The teams would spend two to four days in each camp. Every six weeks the Site Facilitators were called in to Lokitong to give reports on what the people were discussing. The team leaders would then write reports and send them to the TRP manager.

Although the program was initially envisioned to cover only two places, Lokitong and one other called Kaka, it rapidly spread to the whole district. By mid-1981 there were 80,000 Turkana receiving food relief in the food distribution camps, out of a total Turkana population of 140,000. So many animals had died that few men were needed to migrate with the herds and many men also settled in the camps. The drought of 1980 and the government decisions of forced settlement were probably the most instrumental in ending the nomadic lifestyle for the majority of Turkana. By 1993, over half of the Turkana were living as squatters in urban areas, primarily in northwestern Kenya, but also elsewhere.

After two years of doing this, Morris resigned from the program. He felt that the program managers were not listening to the people's opinions regarding rehabilitation. He went back to parish work, which he continued up till September, 1986. He did not have time to continue his previous mode of operation of staying in tents living with the nomads, except in a few instances. There were still a few older Turkana who had never come in for food relief, instead remaining in the bush with their few animals. Morris used to enjoy going out occasionally to meet and talk with them. According to Morris, "They were the ones who, by staying with nomadic life and refusing government assistance, survived and even flourished." In 1989 Morris visited them and found them doing quite well, with their herds multiplying. Unfortunately, when Morris left Turkana in 1986 there were still huge numbers of people "just hanging around the camps," as Morris put it.

Dynamic change is afflicting nomadic peoples all over Africa, and in fact all over the world. Today at least fifty percent of the people in most nomadic ethnic groups have migrated to urban areas, where many are impoverished squatters (for example, ninety percent of the San of southwest Africa, the famous Bushmen celebrated in movies, are now urban squatters). Governments encourage settled living and settled agriculture, which is inimical to the nomadic mode of living. Governments also restrict where nomads can roam with their herds, through district, provincial and national boundaries, as well as through game reserves to which nomads can not bring their domesticated animals. Privatization of the most viable grazing areas and water resources has also been extremely harmful to nomadic pastoralism. Compounding these problems were dramatic increases in violence and cattle theft in Turkana and other parts of northern Kenya and Uganda, beginning in the 1980s and continuing to today. (Violence and cattle theft also afflict the peoples of southern Sudan and Ethiopia.)

In 1980 Morris was prescient in advocating against the construction of a tarmac road from Kitale to Lodwar and on to the Sudan border. He wrote letters to the international funding agency stating that the nomadic Turkana would not benefit from the road, that the road would cause an influx of educated non-Turkana to take over businesses in Turkana country, and that the road would inexorably erode the nomadic way of life. His letters were ignored, and the road was built – probably for defense purposes primarily, to enable a rapid response by Kenya’s Army to the northern border. What Morris predicted is exactly what happened. The tarmac road did not alone destroy the nomadic way of life, but was another nail in the coffin.

It can’t be determined for sure, but the drought of 1980 (actually several years) may have been the first of the period of progressively severe droughts being caused by global warming. Scientific projections are that equatorial Africa will be the most direly impacted by temperature rise. All these troubling phenomena raise questions about how effective an apostolate to the nomads could have been, even if no drought had occurred in 1980. In the 1970s their way of life was deemed permanent, relatively unchanging and spiritually pure. At that time it attracted missionaries seeking the spiritual values of the desert experience. The purpose of evangelization to desert nomads was not to change their way of life but to build on indigenous values, customs and worldview, and relate them to the gospel. Given subsequent history, and the real possibility that all nomads may disappear from the Earth by the end of this century, there is a great need for evaluation and comprehensive discernment as to how the Church should reach out to nomads, being for them a sign of hope and faith.

Morris was supposed to do Mission Promotion work in the U.S. in 1986, but that year the Maryknoll General Council was forming a new Unit to return to northern Sudan. Morris requested permission to join this Unit, and was accepted. He went with two others to El Obeid, Sudan, which will be written about below.

Two other Maryknoll priests went briefly to the Diocese of Lodwar, Steve Scherrer and Jim Roy. Scherrer had been working in Jericho Parish, Nairobi, up till the time it was handed over to the diocese in 1985. In 1986, he felt called to go to the desert in northwestern Kenya, and to Lodwar Diocese in particular, since Morris had been stationed there for many years. By 1986, Scherrer had already started being attracted to monastic life, and he thought that the desert – where monasticism had originated – would give him the opportunity to put his desires into practice. He was assigned to the parish in Lorinak, located in the northern part of the diocese on the western shores of Lake Turkana. Despite the constant heat, this was a pleasant place to live. There was not a large population, and relatively few outstations. Unlike other parts of Turkana, where nomadism was the norm, the Turkana of Lorinak were primarily settled, making a living from fishing in the lake. A Catholic community had already been established by the Kilteagan priests, and Lorinak had the potential to be a very rewarding pastoral experience.

Scherrer threw himself into learning the Turkana language (he already spoke Swahili). Not long after moving to Lorinak, he established a semi-monastic routine in the rectory, rising well before dawn for prayer and meditation. In the daylight hours he spent most of his time in scripture study and translating the bible into Turkana. He also was writing commentaries on scripture, in English and in Turkana. The unfortunate byproduct

of this commendable work was lack of attention to the parish. Other than daily and Sunday Masses, it was very difficult for the people of the parish to see him.

In order to further establish the monastic style of spirituality in Lorinak, Scherrer founded a cloistered convent of young Turkana women on the parish grounds. Attending to their spiritual needs became his predominant task. It was never discovered whether this was an appropriate form of church institution for Turkana, nor whether it would last. After Scherrer had resided in Lorinak for four years, the Diocese of Lodwar made the decision that it needed to station a priest there who would engage in pastoral work. Scherrer left Lodwar and returned to the U.S., with the intention of joining a cloistered monastic community, such as the Trappists or Cistercians. The women's convent in Lorinak was closed.

Fr. Jim Roy had worked in Tudor Parish, Mombasa, from 1980 to 1986 (this will be covered below). At the end of 1986 he turned the parish back to the Diocese of Mombasa, and sought a new assignment that he hoped would be in pre-evangelization. Given that several Maryknollers were in Lodwar Diocese, in 1987 he also requested permission to be assigned there. He had worked in Eldoret Diocese for three years, where Kiltegans also worked, and he had good relations with many of them. An assignment to Lodwar Diocese would fulfill several of his personal goals.

Unfortunately, Maryknoll personnel changes caused Roy to re-think mission in Turkana, and he did not stay long. Morris had already left, to begin a new assignment in Sudan. Roy had spent the few months there learning the Turkana language, and had not yet taken on any parish assignment. He did not consider working with Scherrer feasible and so he returned to the Coast of Kenya, to Mombasa Diocese, where a new mission apostolate offered a chance to engage in pre-evangelization among the Giriama people.