

MARYKNOLL HISTORY IN AFRICA PART SIX

COASTAL KENYA: DIOCESES OF MOMBASA AND GARISSA

The move to the Coast of Kenya, Mombasa Archdiocese

One of the most unexpected but, as it turned out, long-lasting moves by Maryknoll in East Africa was the assignment of a series of priests and Brothers, and later of Lay Missioners, to the Archdiocese of Mombasa, beginning in early 1980. Several Maryknoll Sisters also worked in Mombasa Diocese, dating back to around 1970, and continuing into the 1980s. Maryknollers had been going to Mombasa for vacation since the 1950s, but for decades none had ever expected that Maryknoll priests and Brothers would work there.

Mombasa is where the Catholic Church began in Kenya, in 1892, staffed by the Holy Ghost Fathers from Ireland, who originated and developed missions, schools, medical facilities and other church works throughout the 300-mile distance from Mombasa to Nairobi. The first half of this distance from Mombasa is very hot, arid territory, sparsely populated except for the Taita Hills, which at 6000 feet above sea level have a mild climate, plentiful rainfall and fertile soil. From the halfway point, which is the border of the Archdiocese of Mombasa, the land slowly rises for another 150 miles to Nairobi. In this area are two dioceses which serve the large Kamba tribe, Machakos which was staffed originally by Holy Ghost priests, and Kitui, which was started by the Kiltegan Society, also from Ireland. In 1980 the Holy Ghost Fathers were still the main expatriate order at the Coast.

The East African coast, from southern Somalia through Kenya and Tanzania to northern Mozambique, including the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, Comores and other islands, has been settled for over two thousand years by Bantu farmers and Cushitic pastoral herders. Hunter-gatherer groups had lived at the coast for centuries or millennia prior to that, but when the farmers and herders moved in the hunter-gatherers began disappearing. There are archeological artifacts from over 4000 years ago giving clear evidence that merchants from the Red Sea, Arabia, Persia and India had already begun engaging in trade around the Indian Ocean rim, utilizing the trade winds that blow from the southwest towards Arabia and India between April and September and in the opposite direction between November and March.

Some of the Bantu farmers began living in small settlements along the coast and included fishing as part of their livelihood. The *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, written around the year 40 CE in Greek, and *Geography*, written by Claudius Ptolemy from Alexandria around the year 150 CE, both attest to coastal farmers having sewn boats, dugout canoes and fishing traps, found all along the coast and in the islands. Radiocarbon testing shows that these Bantu peoples had an Early Iron Age level of technology, and discoveries of pottery, ceramics and other traded goods lead to the likely conclusion that they were engaged in Indian Ocean trade from the year 100 BCE. They remained living in small settlements but some of them gradually entered the transoceanic trade as well. These are the people today called the Swahili. Their language is ninety percent related to the languages of the Pokomo and Mijikenda, who inhabit the coastal area from the Tana

River Delta southwards to the Mrima coast (southern Kenya and northern Tanzania) – albeit with a number of Arab words that have entered the vocabulary. Historians today reject previous claims that the Swahili evolved from intermarriage between Africans and Arabs. Swahili are indigenous African (Bantu) people who have gradually evolved a distinct culture in towns along the coast, dating back two thousand years. They even produced their own foundation myths, the *Shirazi* legends, which relate that they are descended from a group of seven Persian princes from the city of Shiraz, a city in Persia (modern Iran) that flourished near the Persian Gulf in the ninth century. These legends serve to give them identity, value, and a sense of moral superiority, but are not based on actual history. Exactly how this widespread group of Bantu farmer/fisherfolk transformed themselves into an urban, mercantile society is not clear, but it probably happened between the years 500 and 1000 CE, and most likely between 750 and 950 CE when they also accepted Islam.

Mark Horton and John Middleton, in their book “The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society,” published in 2000, state the following: “Simply put, the Swahili of the East African coast represent a specialist coastal adaptation of these more widespread farming societies, through their participation in long-distance trade, the adoption of Islam and the development of urban living.”

The Swahili language became the lingua franca of the coast and many parts of the hinterlands, extending as far as western Tanzania and even eastern Congo, since they also acted as middlemen for products traded from deep in the African interior. Original trade products were ivory and wood – hardwood and mangroves – but later included slaves (beginning about the year 800 CE) and gold, which came from Zimbabwe and northern South Africa. The Swahili traders themselves usually did not go into the interior to collect these items but used clients who brought out the goods, which Swahili townsmen then sold to traders arriving on oceanic vessels from other parts of the Indian Ocean rim. The Swahili never developed a national polity but rather a distinct society in which urban culture and household purity were cultivated. Governance in their towns always tended to be very democratic, even if there were some leaders called kings. Chairmen of the town councils would be a more appropriate term.

For over a thousand years they controlled the trade along the East African coast and had several golden ages, especially in the eighteenth century, after the Portuguese had been expelled and prior to the coming of the Omani Arabs in the nineteenth century, who set up the sultanate in Zanzibar. Beginning in the nineteenth century a series of external factors led to the decline of the Swahili control of trade, first being the establishment of Zanzibar control over the coast. The abolition of the slave trade and even ownership of slaves at the end of the century also adversely impacted the fortunes of Swahili patricians, who had plantations using slave labor. With the British Protectorate in 1898 and British establishment of modern global trade, the Swahili lost forever their control of Indian Ocean trade. It is now estimated that there are only about 500,000 Swahili people living along the coasts of Kenya and Tanzania, including in the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba and Lamu, of whom only a few would be of the former patrician class. The former Omani Arabs who came to Zanzibar in the early 1800s now call themselves Swahili, as do the Hadrami Arabs who came from Yemen to Mombasa also in the 1800s (the famous Mazrui family are of this latter group), but the Swahili whose ancestry dates back to the first millennium are true indigenous Africans.

The Swahili traditionally reserved for themselves the right to be Muslim, since Muslims are not allowed to enslave other Muslims nor exploit them. Despite this, two tribes, the Digo to the southwest of Mombasa and the Bajun from the Lamu area (200 miles north of Mombasa) are overwhelmingly Muslim. The Pokomo, who settled along the Tana River down to its mouth at the Indian Ocean, are half Christian and half Muslim. The Giriama, perhaps numerically the largest of these ethnic groups, have fascinated anthropologists for years for having rejected both Islam and Christianity, and to a great extent for having rejected modernity as well. There are two small Mijikenda tribes (*Mijikenda* means nine villages or nine tribes) which have a large percentage of Christians, including Catholics.

European colonists also settled in small numbers at the coast, beginning with the Portuguese in the 16th century, who built Fort Jesus on the island of Mombasa in 1593. They lasted there only one century, forced out by the joined forces of the local Swahili and the Sultan of Oman in 1698. The British came in the 19th century, but never colonized the coast. They made an agreement with the Sultan of Zanzibar, the Arab ruler of coastal East Africa at the time, to set aside a ten-mile strip along the coast that would be nominally ruled by the Sultan. The hinterland would be reserved for the Mijikenda tribes. In 1887 administration of the coast was given to the British East Africa Company, and in 1898, two years after construction of the railway had commenced, it was made a British Protectorate. During British administration more plantations were developed along sections of the coast, growing sisal, cashew nuts and coconuts, although the latter two became primarily small-holder crops. At Independence in 1963 the whole coastal area became part of independent Kenya, ending any possible claims to the ten-mile strip by the Sultan of Zanzibar. However, Muslim marriage courts, called Kadhi Courts, were recognized in the constitution of independent Kenya, a matter that has remained so sensitive that it had to be retained in the new constitution approved by Kenyan citizens in August, 2010. Although there was never large-scale British settlement on the coast similar to that in the Rift Valley and western highlands of Kenya, a number of British did settle there permanently, drawn by the constantly warm climate tempered by cooling trade winds. Many remained living at the coast as Kenyan citizens after Independence.

Many of Kenya's people from the large ethnic groups in the central and western highlands and from around Lake Victoria have also migrated to Mombasa, drawn by the prospects of good jobs, a movement of peoples that began long prior to the colonial era, picked up during the colonial era and greatly increased after Independence. The economic sectors attracting job-seekers were and are the tourism industry, which is primarily situated on the coast and is today the largest employer in the private sector, the huge railway terminal, and the largest and most active port in East Africa, which has created jobs not only at the port but many others in clearing, forwarding, wholesale and transport. These economic anchors have spawned a variety of industries located in the environs of Mombasa, particularly the huge oil refinery which sells refined petroleum products to all of East Africa, cement factories, automobile assembly plants and many light industrial facilities. This economy, of course, generates many jobs in the professional sector, in education, and in business. The rural areas of Mombasa produce pineapples and coconuts, and just north of Mombasa there still exist huge plantations growing sisal and raising dairy cattle.

Although there are local people, both Swahili and Mijikenda, with jobs in Mombasa's formal sector, many of the good jobs in Mombasa and in the tourist sector have been taken by Kenyans from inland, called up-country people, who tend to be overwhelmingly Christian. So, there are many Catholics in Mombasa Archdiocese, but located primarily near beach hotels and businesses in Mombasa itself. In the Archdiocese's rural areas there are far fewer Catholics, with the exception of the Taita Hills 100 miles to the west of Mombasa. With so many upcountry Kenyans the Catholic Church has flourished in Mombasa, regularly expanding the number of parishes. There have been a fair number of vocations in the Archdiocese, although mostly from up-country tribes rather than from the truly indigenous coastal peoples. So far, all the native Kenyan Bishops of Mombasa have been from central Kenya.

In general there have been harmonious relations between Muslims and Christians at Kenya's coast. However, high unemployment among many Swahili men has created tension, which can be exacerbated by radical Muslim preachers in mosques. They blame the up-country people for 'taking all the jobs.' In this, religion does not seem to be an important factor, merely coincidental to the de facto religious denomination of each group. There have been occasional riots in the city when visiting, radical Muslim preachers have raised the employment issue in mosques on a Friday, although these demonstrations have been short-lived.

A more pernicious development has been the violence surrounding multi-party elections, starting in 1992. In the months prior to the elections of 1992 and 1997 up-country people, especially the Luo who live in identifiable neighborhoods of Mombasa, were violently attacked, in clear attempts to either prevent them from voting or intimidate them into voting for coastal candidates. After the disputed election of December, 2007, Luo and Kikuyu, plus other up-country tribal peoples, were again violently attacked and many were killed. Up-country people are abandoning informal sector business, such as on city sidewalks, due both to harassment by city authorities and fear of random violence.

This was the Archdiocese to which Maryknoll decided to have a presence in 1980. At that time, though, many of the tensions that later erupted over politics and economics did not exist, or were certainly not visible. Maryknollers considered Mombasa to be an almost idyllic place, albeit very hot and humid. People were friendly, courteous and mild-mannered – 'laid back,' to use an American expression. Parish work was not difficult, as the people were very responsive. The Holy Ghost priests were also very welcoming, a natural virtue of theirs. However, this latter congregation also realized that they were getting older and had very few younger priests coming from Ireland. In 1980 there were likewise very few African diocesan priests. The new African Bishop was seeking other missionary societies to work in Mombasa, at the same time that the new Maryknoll Kenya Region was looking for new placements for its growing numbers in Kenya. From 1980 to 1982 six Maryknoll priests went to Mombasa, two for education purposes and four to staff two existing parishes, one in Mombasa and the other in the town of Kilifi.

Tudor Parish

Fr. Jim Roy had worked in Kenya from 1970 to 1976, at Jericho Parish in Nairobi and then Burnt Forest Parish in Eldoret Diocese. From 1976 to 1979 he did Maryknoll Promotion work in the U.S., returning to Kenya in 1979. Fr. Bill Madden, the new Kenya

Regional Superior, asked him to go to Mombasa to investigate possibilities for Maryknoll commitments in that diocese. Roy said:

There was a new Bishop in Mombasa, Nicodemus Kirima, and I had known him in Nairobi, since he was in Makadara Parish when I was in Jericho. He had become Bishop in May, 1978, the first African Bishop of Mombasa, and had asked Maryknoll to look into possibilities of mission work at the coast. I visited Mombasa and in 1980 the Kenya Regional Assembly agreed that Maryknoll would take St. Joseph Parish in the Tudor section on the northeastern part of the island of Mombasa, which had already been established by Holy Ghost Father Jim Delaney. Maryknoll agreed to take this parish for three to six years at the most. Later that year Fr. Joe Trainor joined me in Tudor.

I would say that of all the places I had worked this was the most active. The response of the Catholics and of all the different Christian and other religions, and of people from different tribes, was very, very good.

As had been done in Jericho Parish in Nairobi, Roy converted the large church, through use of curtains and removable separators, into a multi-use building. He started a nursery school in the church, using the Montessori method, which became very popular and successful with Tudor's middle-class residents. The parish developed a very good choir, making innovative use of modern and traditional African instruments. Trainor commented, "Jim was very good in liturgy and put a lot of work into that." Youth work was emphasized, and the parish had an active, involved youth group. Catechetical work was also prioritized, and every day after school and on Saturdays, there were groups of school children studying for sacraments. There was also an active catechumenate for adults. The parish was small in terms of size, perhaps only two to four square kilometers, so it was easy to walk to people's homes for visiting with individuals or families.

Mombasa is one of the places in East Africa where Swahili is an indigenous language, with its own identifiable nasal accent. Accents of Kenyans from the large tribes of central and western Kenya are notoriously bad, unless they live in Mombasa for any length of time. All of them, and especially those of Bantu tribes, become totally fluent in Swahili, even if they don't fully share the pronounced nasal accent of the Swahili people. Jim Roy became expert in Swahili (he was already fluent) living in Mombasa, in part because he made on-going study of the language an important component of his mission service. Due in great part to Roy's warm hospitality, Tudor Parish became a place where those learning Swahili went to put into practice what they had learned at the language school in Musoma, Tanzania. A retired school teacher, Mama Shikuku, who was an indigenous Swahili woman, became the language informant to a succession of Maryknollers learning the language. All church work in the Archdiocese of Mombasa is done in Swahili, with the exception of a few English Masses in some places. (Perhaps in the Taita Hills Mass is celebrated in the Taita language in some rural parishes, although the Taita people speak very good Swahili.) The parish in Tudor had three Swahili Masses on Sunday morning, and one English Mass on Saturday evening.

Two major priorities for Tudor were the establishment and development of Small Christian Communities and making it a fully self-reliant parish that could be easily handed over to a diocesan priest. Roy said, "The Bishops of AMECEA countries had

asked in 1976 for the development of SCCs, which became our priority in Tudor. It was slow going and a few did not succeed in the beginning. But then we finally understood what they were about and we began with an emphasis on the bible, on local meetings, and on discussion in their places of work or residence.” Despite the initial difficulties in starting SCCs, the urban multi-tribal situation (especially for Catholics) of Mombasa created the environment for SCCs to take root, just as in Nairobi.

Another important success that Roy cites is self-reliance.

By 1986, when I left, there was no need of Maryknoll subsidies, whether in transport, food or catechetics. Not only did the Catholics of Tudor pay for the needs of the parish, but also ten percent of parish income was being given to a poor, rural parish in Kwale District (southwest of Mombasa), called Kinango, where a diocesan Kenyan priest, Fr. Nicholas Kosari, was assigned.

In addition, Roy was able to put much of the annual income in interest-earning accounts, which he made available to the new pastor of Tudor in 1986.

In 1981, Roy was made the Maryknoll Kenya coordinator for Justice and Peace. While he was in Mombasa the United States developed the Rapid Response doctrine, first enunciated by President Jimmy Carter in 1980 and then fully implemented by President Ronald Reagan. In 1979, the Iranian revolution had replaced the hated Shah of Iran by a clerically-run theocratic state, and in November that year a number of Americans were held hostage in Iran, a crisis that lasted for over a year. That same November of 1979 the U.S. embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, was attacked by radical Muslim students causing the death of one American soldier, and the mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest shrine in all of Islam, was also attacked by radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The U.S. perceived these actions as evidence of growing threats to U.S. control of those countries, all Muslim, many of which had huge quantities of exportable oil. The Rapid Response Doctrine was implemented to ensure that American military forces could fly into any Middle-Eastern trouble spot within twenty-four hours. Various places in Africa were chosen for placement of military installations suitable for moving large numbers of soldiers and materiel, for possible permanent military bases, and for refurbishment of American naval vessels.

Kenya was considered a stable country and firmly in the western capitalist orbit. Through various quid-pro-quo bilateral arrangements, the U.S. extracted agreements from Kenya that airstrips in northern Kenya (where there were few people and little chance that reporters would snoop around) would be made available for the Rapid Response forces, that Kenya and the U.S. would engage in a number of cooperative military actions, and that the port of Mombasa would become available for the first time ever to the U.S. Navy. From that time, U.S. naval ships have been docking in Mombasa every month or two for refueling and refurbishment, and for rest and recreation for the troops on board. At times, there were up to 7,000 American sailors and marines on land in Kenya for a full week – good for Kenya’s economy, but young Americans bring negative cultural baggage with them. In return the United States increased aid to Kenya, especially food aid during the drought years of 1980 to 1984, trained many members of Kenya’s

armed forces, and overlooked the growing dictatorial tendencies of President Daniel Arap Moi.

Roy did an analysis of this new phenomenon, which greatly affected the city of Mombasa, and submitted documents to the Kenya Region. Militarization of the African continent has dubious benefits, conceptualized out of a short-term national security perspective. The long-term deleterious consequences of a military emphasis in international relations have been proven in the subsequent history of horrendous conflict in central Africa and in the Horn of Africa. However, Roy felt that other Maryknollers did not take this seriously. Some were formerly in various branches of the U.S. armed services prior to joining the seminary, and many shared pro-military sentiments typical of American Catholics who grew up in the 1940s to the 1960s.

It was at that time, in late 1982, that an American sailor, in Mombasa for R and R, was accused of killing a Kenyan prostitute in a hotel room. This made headlines in both Kenya and the United States. In what has always been considered a secret arrangement between the Kenyan and U.S. governments, the sailor was handed over to the U.S., with the claim that there was insufficient evidence to hold him, and he was immediately flown back to the U.S. It would be almost impossible to find anyone in Kenya who thought that the sailor was innocent, and most expatriate missionaries living in Mombasa also felt he was guilty. This incident soured the opinion of the overwhelming majority of Kenyan people towards the U.S. military and U.S. government. Roy said that although a good number of American soldiers used their short breaks in Kenya in a reputable way, such as visiting game parks or tourist hotels at the beaches, too many of them engaged in drunken, destructive behavior in city bars and hotels. He said that the U.S. consul in Mombasa had to go around to all bars, restaurants and places where destruction might occur, telling the owners to just send a bill to him after the soldiers went back on board the ships and the U.S. would pay for the damage. Several years later another prostitute was killed and an American soldier was initially held as a suspect. He, too, was released by the Kenya police and returned to the U.S. (Or maybe he was tried in court and acquitted; accurate memory of this incident twenty-five years ago is not at hand.) In this case, though, Roy said that he was probably innocent, but that this incident only further enflamed Kenyan public opinion against the presence of U.S. soldiers on Kenyan soil.

Tudor Parish did not have any overt ministry with regard to dialogue with Islam or Muslims. The city of Mombasa is at least fifty percent Muslim and Tudor's various estates likewise had many Muslims. Tudor was a middle-class to upper-middle class section of Mombasa, and Muslims who lived in this area were fairly affluent – and a few were wealthy. In the early 1980s there was no animosity between Christians and Muslims, and so there was no felt need to pursue action to minimize potential conflict. Muslims in Tudor and other sections of Mombasa made very good neighbors. Many of the businessmen in the city were Muslims, and Christians did not discriminate in choosing establishments in which to do business. The Catholic schools in Mombasa, arguably among the very best in Coast Province, usually had a student body fifty percent Muslim, and Muslim dress and forms of prayer were allowed. The Catholic Archdiocese promoted good relations with Muslims and proselytization of Muslims was forbidden. This was an environment that enabled enrichment of one's own spirituality and understanding of God's will through on-going relations with Muslims, plus gradual

understanding of all the tenets of Islam. However, there was no sense of urgency in promoting dialogue between Christians and Muslims nor any felt need to engage in serious study of Islam.

Living in Mombasa, though, did facilitate a greater understanding and appreciation of Islam and Muslims for both Roy and Trainor, plus the other Maryknollers who spent some time in Mombasa. The call to prayer – using loudspeakers, but never very loud – became an accustomed part of the religio/cultural landscape. Muslim dress, such as the kanzu worn by men and the buibui worn by women, was just another non-western form of dress that Maryknollers adapted to. In the 1980s it was rare to find any Muslim woman in Mombasa who wore a veil that covered the face. These forms of dress were also perceived as colorful elements that made living in Mombasa so enriching. It should also be noted that Muslim neighborhoods, particularly the ‘Old Town’ section of Mombasa, were very safe, with petty thievery unheard of. (Crime was increasing in the 1980s, however, primarily by up-country people. Some Muslims, though, also began to engage in crime – such as pick-pocketing.)

Another tenet of Islam that could not be avoided in Mombasa was the annual celebration of Ramadan. This is the month in which all Muslims, young and old, fast from dawn to sunset, with just a few exceptions for the very young or those who are sick. All Muslim students fasted throughout the day, although some took water due to the heat and humidity. The fasting affected schools, work places and general life. Then every evening, the streets would come alive all over the city with vendors selling myriad types of food to the hundreds of people milling about. Fr. Frank Breen spent three months in 1984 in Tudor practicing Swahili, one of which coincided with Ramadan (mid-May to mid-June that year). He and Roy made it a practice to go out each night, and “celebrate Ramadan” by tasting different Swahili and Arab foods on sale. There were so many types and quantities of food that Breen even mused, “I don’t know if this is supposed to be a fasting month or a feasting month.” The end of the fast, at the sighting of the new moon, called Id El Fitr, is perhaps the high holy day for Muslims. On this day there begins a two- or three-day celebration, in which everyone dresses in their best clothes. Wealthy Swahili women would still wear the buibui, but it could not hide the richness of the cloth of their newly-bought dresses, nor their very fashionable shoes, the deep colors of their facial makeup, and the aroma of their expensive perfumes. Fireworks are set off and there is an overwhelming sense of merriment pervading the city. Breen later commented, “That year was as though I celebrated Christmas twice. Anyone who has celebrated Ramadan in Mombasa forever has a very different and positive attitude of Muslims.”

Maryknoll Fr. Al Smidlein was one who did make a systematic effort in learning about Islam in the six years that he was in Mombasa, while he was teaching at Aga Khan High School. He also cultivated relations with Muslims, including highly educated ones who could enhance his knowledge of Islam. He had begun this interest while he was in the town parish of Shinyanga, Tanzania, where there was a large Muslim presence. He became very learned in the Koran, Muslim teachings and Muslim practices. He used his knowledge primarily to help him interact with Muslim students, the majority at Aga Khan H.S. where he taught. He did not go to mosques, however, except for an occasional visit. Muslims are not impressed by a priest going to worship in a mosque, no matter how reverentially and correctly it is done. Some fundamentalist Muslims can even be irritated by such a visit. In general Muslims would give wholehearted acceptance only if the priest

said he wanted to convert to Islam. Smidlein opined that “the only kind of Christian religious leader who would be greatly accepted by Muslims is one who renounces everything and lives an extremely devout, ascetical life, like a hermit monk living in a desert or mountaintop. For Muslims, that would be the sign that the Christian leader is truly religious.” One evening, as he sat on the veranda of his third-floor apartment, sipping scotch-on-the-rocks and enjoying a cooling breeze augmented by several well-placed fans, Smidlein wryly admitted that he was not congenitally inclined towards asceticism. In addition to Smidlein, there was an older Holy Ghost priest, of Indian (Goan) ancestry, who made a lifelong effort of learning about Islam and engaging in relations and dialogue with leading Muslims in an organized fashion.

However, organized efforts to promote formal dialogue between Christians and Muslims have never been done in Mombasa. To a large extent, this is testimony to the great tolerance of people of both religions towards each other and to the fact that they have been living in close contact for centuries without acrimony. Live and let live is the guiding principle. Furthermore, the branch of Muslims in Mombasa is Sunni-Shafi, the moderate form of Islam. Prior to 1990 militant preaching in Mombasa was unheard of, and even since then it has been rare. Additionally, the militancy has been directed at perceived economic disempowerment of Muslims by up-country people, as mentioned above, not at religious differences. Whether the growing presence of Al Qaeda members in neighboring Somalia and suspected support for Al Qaeda’s methods and ideology among a certain number of Muslims in Kenya will lead to recognition of the need for greater formal contacts between Christians and Muslims will need to be seen.

Joe Trainor stayed at Tudor for less than three years, till the beginning of 1983, and later commented about his work there.

I took several tasks not central to running the parish itself, such as saying Mass at the Mombasa Polytechnic every week. I also did a lot at the ‘Nyumba ya wazee’ (Swahili for Residence for the Elderly, similar to Assisted Living or Nursing Home in the U.S.). This was a residence in our parish run by the Little Sisters of the Poor, where I said Mass in the morning and then came back for instructions for some of the elderly residents who wished to be baptized. I also assisted a Holy Ghost Father, Jack Brannigan, as chaplain of Coast General Hospital, the large government hospital. I had one whole section of the hospital and he had another. I was there every other day, visiting all the patients whether Christian or not.

Roy went to the government hospital only on occasion since “there were relatively few Catholics at this hospital because they had medical benefits from their places of work and could go to private hospitals. But I would also visit the government hospital at times, for the ecumenical aspect of our parish life.”

Tudor produced several vocations, which Roy was proud of.

Some of the boys went to the high school seminary and while I was at Tudor one of the local girls made her profession in the Sisters of St. Joseph, the diocesan congregation of Mombasa. There was an ordination in Tudor, although

the man was not originally from Tudor. But he chose Tudor as his parish for the sake of ordination. That was one of the highlights of my stay in Tudor.

In 1983 Trainor moved to Nairobi to run the Maryknoll Center House, replacing Brother Ron Rak who had done this admirably for close to twenty years. He was replaced in Tudor by newly ordained Fr. Dan Boyd. Trainor said that “Bill Madden, the Regional Superior, wanted Dan to be in a pastoral situation.” Before leaving Tudor, Trainor strongly pressured Jim Roy to stay in Tudor Parish for at least another three years. He thought that Maryknoll should have an urban parish as a center where visiting Maryknollers, from rural places in Mombasa Diocese and from other parts of East Africa, could stay. He had also recommended building a second story onto the rectory, large enough for four bedrooms.

Dan Boyd stayed in Tudor for only a few months and in June, 1983, he had to go to Umoja Parish in Nairobi to replace Fr. Walt Gleason who had just died of a heart attack. In September he returned to Mombasa and went to Kongowea Parish, where Fr. Martin Kivuva was pastor. Kivuva is of the Kamba tribe, but grew up at the coast, and was a local diocesan priest. He had been ordained for about ten years when Boyd joined him, and was running a dynamic parish. He had also turned the large rectory at Kongowea into a semi-guest house for diocesan priests of Mombasa, as they had no other residence to go to when in Mombasa. They could have gone to the rectory at the cathedral, but felt uncomfortable there. Kivuva later became Communications Secretary for the Archdiocese of Mombasa, which led to him going on for studies in the U.S. in communications and video production and becoming co-director of Ukweli Video in Nairobi with Fr. Dick Quinn (cf above). Eventually he became Bishop of Machakos Diocese, which is a predominantly Kamba diocese. Because of the good relationships he developed with many Maryknollers in Mombasa and continuing in Nairobi, Kivuva has always been considered a close friend of Maryknoll.

Like Tudor, Kongowea was not a large parish although it did have one chapel about five or ten kilometers away that later became a parish. The Catholic makeup of Kongowea was primarily Luo, although there were people there of many different tribes. It was a working class section of Mombasa on the north mainland, with few services for the poor Kenyans living there, who worked either in the tourist industry or informal sector. There was a large market not far from the parish, making the dirt roads into the parish always very crowded. In theory, the wealthy neighborhoods of the immediate north mainland, called the Nyali area, were in Kongowea Parish, but any Catholics from Nyali considered the Cathedral Parish in the center of town their parish. Work in the parish was typical parish work, such as youth work, catechetics and the development of SCCs. Boyd stayed till 1986, at which time he returned to Maryknoll, NY.

In 1985 Trainor returned to Mombasa Diocese, first to fill in for Fr. Phil McCue in Kilifi Parish (cf below) for seven months, while McCue was in the U.S. for health reasons. Trainor then went to Kikambala Parish for a year, to assist Holy Ghost Father Tom Roach. Kikambala is halfway between Mombasa and Kilifi. After this assignment, Trainor was asked by the Bishop, with Maryknoll assent, to start a new parish near Mombasa Airport called Bomu, which will be mentioned below.

By 1986 Roy had stayed at Tudor for six and a half years, and was able to hand it over to a diocesan priest, Fr. Ernest Mutua, a very capable man who had been a priest for over ten years. Roy felt it necessary to explain his decision:

Some Maryknollers wanted Maryknoll to keep Tudor longer, arguing that there was more physical development that could be done and that with more guest rooms it would be a place where Maryknollers could stay when visiting the coast. They also felt that Maryknoll should give closer to ten years to a parish. However, I gave several arguments that it was time for us to hand it over. The parish was definitely self-reliant, usually the prime criterion in deciding to hand over a parish. Furthermore, they were not aware that the Regional Assembly of 1980 had stated that we would stay in Tudor for a maximum of six years. In leaving Tudor, Maryknoll was not leaving the Archdiocese. We still had Kilifi Parish and we were looking at possibilities in rural parts of the diocese. In the city many people from upcountry are Catholic and they make the parishes very dynamic. But if you move out to the rural areas the Church is not as active or well-known. In fact, it is suspect in some places. So I was thinking this was where Maryknoll could really contribute, especially in either Kilifi or Kwale Districts. In 1986, the concept of primary evangelization was being accentuated in missionary societies and I considered rural parts of Mombasa perfect places for doing this.

Roy went to a different place to do primary evangelization, to Turkana, but stayed for only about six months, citing differences in mission approach to what he was thinking. After a sabbatical in Rome, he returned to Mombasa in 1988 and went out to a very rural parish called Marafa, which accommodated exactly his desire to evangelize the Giriama.

After Maryknoll left Tudor diocesan priests have staffed it ever since, at first just one and then two priests. In 2010 there were three priests in residence at the parish, Fr. Harrison, the pastor, Fr. Daniel Miyanah, the assistant, and a third priest who teaches at the Mombasa Polytechnic, which is now part of Pwani University. Not long after 1986 the diocesan priests added a second floor to the priests' residence. This floor has two spacious bedrooms for residents, a guest bedroom (all three bedrooms are self-contained), a large living room, and a covered-over veranda. The downstairs section still has two bedrooms, plus the kitchen/dining room. Outside the rectory is a large, sheltered waiting area, for parishioners or anyone else coming to see the priests.

The original Mass schedule on weekends remains much the same, an English Mass on Saturday evening, three Swahili Masses on Sunday morning, and now an additional English Mass on Sunday evening. The congregation is huge at all Masses and the liturgies, which were very good even in the 1980s, are now so superb that they can be matched for excellence with celebrations anywhere in the world. Complementing spectacular singing, the presence of all ages, and full participation by an enormous congregation are energetic, informed sermons that relate scripture with life in contemporary Kenya and Mombasa – sermons delivered in perfect Swahili and more than a touch of appropriate humor. The third Swahili Mass is sung by the senior choir, which Fr. Miyanah calls “a national choir.” It is so well known that it is invited to sing at Mass in other places, such as the cathedral in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to which it was invited

in 2010. Many of its members are the same people who started in the choir in 1980 when Jim Roy had just arrived.

The large field a block down from the parish, the same field that was used in the 1990s for the beginnings of an outreach program to street boys run by MM Brother Loren Beaudry (c.f. Part Six) and on which later was built a girls' secondary school, is now the location of the diocesan pastoral training center. Several well-constructed and beautiful buildings can accommodate around one hundred people, enabling the diocese to run many types of short courses, seminars and meetings for clergy, religious and laity. When not in use, or if several rooms are available, visiting clergy or religious from elsewhere can stay at the pastoral center for a very reasonable rate. However, this facility is not directly connected to the parish, as it is under diocesan administration.

Just as in earlier years, Tudor Parish still has an excellent catechetical program for schoolchildren and adults. Many of the schoolchildren who were either baptized or made first communion in the 1970s and 1980s are now adults, comprising what could be called second- or third-generation Catholics, and raising the third or fourth generation of urban Catholics in Mombasa.

Calling Tudor Parish self-reliant is a far too minimal description; this is a parish that can assuredly be held forth as the face of the mature African Church. Given the relentless, massive decline in numbers of church-going Catholics in western nations, one could well argue that Tudor is a prime example of the emergence of former mission churches to a de-facto central place in the universal Catholic Church. Rome may consider itself central; but if anyone wants to know what the twenty-first century Church will look like, one has to go to Tudor.

Kilifi Parish

In 1980 and 1981 Maryknoll concluded its ministry in western Kenya, in the parishes of Kebirigo and Burnt Forest, making available several priests for assignments elsewhere in Kenya. Given that Bishop Kirima had asked Maryknoll to take several parishes in Mombasa Archdiocese, Fr. Bill Madden, the Kenya Regional Superior, asked Frs Ed Schoellmann and Phil McCue to accept assignments to Kilifi Parish, which had been started by the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1965. A small, well-built church was in the middle of a fairly large plot of land, much of it available for further expansion. At the edge of the plot was a large rectory, built to keep the interior relatively cool in deference to Kilifi's constant humid heat. Four large bedrooms meant that usually there was ample room for two guests, and cots could be added if more came. The Maryknollers added screens on windows in the bedrooms, living room, and dining room, and eventually added them to the two verandas on either side of the house. This made the back veranda a pleasant place to sit in the evening while awaiting supper.

Kilifi was, and to a great extent still is, a small district town on the Indian Ocean halfway between the city of Mombasa and the smaller city of Malindi. The Kilifi Creek goes inland about ten miles and for years the only viable route to Mombasa from Kilifi was to cross the creek by ferry. Two small ferries, prone to breaking down, endlessly carried vehicles back and forth, including buses, lorries and passengers on foot. At times the line waiting for the ferry could last two to even four hours. For many years, this served as a real psychological barrier to travel to Mombasa for the Maryknollers living in Kilifi. The alternative route around the creek was on a dirt and gravel road that added

some fifty kilometers to the trip and which was impassable in heavy rain. In 1990 a large bridge was built over the creek by a Japanese firm, opening up transport connections from northern Coast Province to Mombasa.

Kilifi town's current population is about 30,000, with another 40,000 living in the environs of the town. Population of the whole parish territory is somewhere between 100,000 and 150,000, depending on where one parish ends and another begins, and Catholics are a very small percentage. Almost all people of rural Kilifi Parish are Giriama, whereas in the town are the indigenous Swahili people and upcountry people who work in government posts. Although the Catholic population is a minority in the town, there are enough to fill three Masses on Sunday morning. Most town Catholics are from upcountry ethnic groups. In the 1980s there used to be a very early morning Mass in English on Sunday, which was later dropped as very few attended it. However, now (2010) the second of the three Masses on Sunday is in English and all three Masses have large crowds, particularly the third Mass.

Kilifi has very little industry, if at all. On the outskirts of the town is a large cashew nut processing plant, which was the largest employer in the town, employing about 2000 workers in its heyday in the 1980s. The quantity of cashews declined due to aging of the trees, tree diseases and pests, insufficient agricultural extension to the small-holder farmers, and lack of maintenance of roads and other infrastructure. Farmers always complained that their pay was too low to justify improvements in their trees. In 1993, the marketing was taken away from cooperatives and privatized, allowing for local middle-men to buy from the farmers. This made the situation worse. In 1996 the Kenya Cashew Nut Factory, which had been opened by the government only in 1975, was also privatized. The private owners ran the factory into the ground, and it was permanently closed in 1998. Whatever machinery was in the plant was stolen or cannibalized. Coast Province has tremendous potential for cashew nut production, but very few quality nuts are being produced – and the few that are grown are exported to India for processing. Some NGOs and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute located in nearby Mtwapa, are doing research and formulating a plan of revising the cashew nut industry on Kenya's coast and especially in Kilifi District.

Kilifi is also home to what was the provincial agricultural college (now Pwani University; *pwani* is the Swahili word for coast), a medical research institute called KEMRI, and Welcome, a pharmaceutical company. The latter two are doing practical research on the extent of malaria and methods to reduce its impact. Other than these, the government is the main employer in town. There are a few hotels, particularly the internationally known Mnarani Club, which specializes in world-class deep-sea fishing expeditions. This hotel is strictly private, however, and has no connection at all to the life of the parish, except maybe for a few hotel patrons who come over for Mass on Sunday. A few former British settlers from the colonial era had large villas along Kilifi's beach just north of the town, but most have sold them and moved out. Kilifi has some of the best farmland along Kenya's north coast, and there are very good dairy farms not far from the town. Other crops grown are tropical fruit, such as mangos, papaya and pineapples, plus coconuts, maize, millet and cassava. Almost every Giriama household has cashew nut trees, but most of these need to be rejuvenated. South of Kilifi are huge sisal plantations that line the main road for about fifteen miles. These plantations provide a moderate amount of permanent employment and intermix dairy farming with sisal

production. Sisal, the fiber traditionally used to make rope, is today used primarily to make fiber baskets.

According to statistics, 57% of the rural population along Kenya's coast live below the poverty line. Causes are lack of jobs, steep decline of the major cash crop (cashews), and general lack of rural development. Almost all children go to primary school, but Coast Province's percentage going to secondary school is lower than the national average. The Giriama historically rejected many aspects of modernity, such as education, although most realize the need today. Lack of income, though, makes it impossible for many to go to secondary school.

The Giriama also historically rejected all imported religions, such as Islam and Christianity, tenaciously holding on to their traditional beliefs. Giriama elders held sway in this religious system, going periodically to special places called *Kayas*, which we might translate as shrines, to commune with Giriama divinities and make decisions for the tribe. This elder system has been mostly rejected by the younger generation today, and the old *Kaya* shrines have fallen into disrepair, but relatively few Giriama have replaced it with world religions. In the 1990s some Pentacostal churches were making inroads with the Giriama, due to the ease of becoming a member, but two Maryknollers, Brother Frank TenHoopen in the 1980s and Fr. Don Donovan in the 1990s, both said that in rural Giriama land there were many possibilities for primary evangelization.

This was the context to which Schoellmann arrived in late 1980 or the beginning of 1981. He was followed a few months later by McCue. Phil McCue needed to work in a small town parish such as Kilifi, because of a rare physiological disorder. He had a bad kidney, which doctors wanted to remove. However, they discovered that the other kidney was not functioning at all, and so retained about a quarter of the kidney on which they operated. With only a quarter of a kidney, McCue had to drink lots of water and find sufficient time to rest. He could not do much physical work, even though he had been a very strong man in his youth. All who lived with him knew this, and set their own schedules accordingly.

The Maryknollers' first task was going around to the outstations, getting to know the people both in the outstations and the town, and setting up a monthly Mass schedule. They also formed a parish council, met with all the catechists regularly, and began encouraging the Catholics to start Small Christian Communities. There were two major adjustments required of these newcomers to Kenya's coast: one was to the heat, although Kilifi's slow pace made this easier to accomplish. More irritating was the constant blaring of the Muslim call to prayer from a loudspeaker on a mosque immediately adjacent to the parish compound. The first call was at 5:00 AM, sometimes earlier, and it took many months to attain ability to sleep through this. Some did adjust; others always found it difficult. In an unfortunate piece of original planning, the church compound was located in the middle of the Swahili village, populated overwhelmingly by Muslims. The call to prayer was aimed at them, inadvertently including the Catholic compound. On at least one occasion relations between the priests and mosque-going Muslims were not handled harmoniously.

After three years, Schoellmann left Kilifi, to return to the U.S. for further education and work on Promotion, and was replaced by Brother Frank TenHoopen. McCue was alone and had to have someone else assist him, but no priest was available.

(Actually, two priests became available in 1984, but Joe Glynn, the new Regional Superior, wanted them to go to Bura in Garissa Diocese. Other priests were needed for the Maryknoll parishes in Nairobi.) TenHoopen had been in Kenya from 1979 to 1981 on Overseas Training Program (OTP), stationed in Buru Buru in Nairobi. He returned to the U.S. to complete his formation, going on for a Masters Degree in Scripture. On return to Kenya he first asked to do the full course in Swahili, since he was sick for much of the time at language school in 1979 and in Nairobi used little Swahili. This time he learned the language well. He arrived in Kilifi at the beginning of 1984, and for the next six years TenHoopen functioned as the Assistant Pastor of Kilifi – an arrangement apparently acceptable to Bishop Kirima. As will be mentioned, this was not acceptable to Bishop John Njenga when he became Archbishop of Mombasa in 1990.

TenHoopen believes that he arrived at an ideal place to learn mission work.

Phil McCue was the best person in my formation, whether in the seminary or after I came out to Kenya. I don't know what, but there was something that really clicked in our relationship. He was the one who really grounded me in mission and Maryknoll. In the seminary it was just a lot of theory in books. For example, when I first arrived in Kilifi I was warned that Phil could be somewhat crusty at times, but it was just the opposite. On arrival in Kilifi – and despite his physical problems – he wouldn't let me carry my bags into the house. He had to do it. And for the first month, he didn't assign me to anything. He let me go with him to the outstations and just check out the whole mission.

Of course Phil had me working soon enough, which I appreciated. There were six outstations when I arrived and over the years we built them up to eighteen. Today there are even more outstations. We went to the outstations on weekends, so that each place had Mass once or twice a month. Our schedule was that Phil said Mass in two outstations on Saturdays, while I remained in Kilifi to take care of parish matters or inquiries. On Sundays, Phil would say all three Masses at the parish and I would go out to two or on occasion three outstations. I would conduct the service, preach, and distribute communion. Naturally, in the beginning doing this in Swahili was difficult, but this is how I learned to speak Swahili.

TenHoopen also did the first and second stages of Baptism in all the outstations, so that McCue would only have to do the final stage of Baptism, “which consisted basically of just pouring water on the heads of those being baptized. He was grateful for these reduced chores.” In 1985 McCue had to go to the U.S. for health treatment and recuperation, and was gone for seven months. Fr. Joe Trainor took his place in Kilifi, saying all Masses and conducting other sacraments, although TenHoopen continued doing most parish administration.

McCue and TenHoopen put in a lot of effort in the development of SCCs.

We published booklets in Swahili for the SCCs, which we called meditations. Originally, the SCCs were groups that met merely to pray, but we wanted them to reflect. We stressed the See, Judge, Act methodology. We produced these booklets for several years. There was no Mass celebrated at SCCs,

as we wanted them to realize that the purpose of these gatherings was community reflection and discussion.

The main objective of the two Maryknollers was the spiritual enrichment and growth in faith of parishioners. TenHoopen admitted that they didn't get involved with the social concerns of residents of Kilifi District, including education and health. In general they also did not do too much building, although they did help in the building of a few outstation churches, added a wing onto the main church in Kilifi, and built a building used as a pastoral center. This latter center was used extensively and very well over the years. Fr. Jim Roy, who came in 1990, said:

We inherited the lay leadership seminars that took place in the center three times a year. People came in from outstations for about a week, for courses in scripture, leadership, health and other matters. They were expected to take what they learned back to their churches, places of work, and their farms, and be a progressive influence on their neighbors.

TenHoopen believes that there was tangible growth in faith. "I saw a real deep spirituality, which I could feel in the *Ibadas*" (i.e. the services in the outstations).

Since all the people in the outstations were Giriama, TenHoopen was once asked whether he found them cold and unwelcoming, as is stereotypically attributed to this ethnic group. He laughed sardonically, saying:

Many of us say that the first people you work with are those you like the best. I found the Giriama the most gentle, most welcoming people I know. I learned the Giriama's gestures, the soft way they talk, and for me that became the norm for how African people are. I actually found it more difficult to adjust to people of the upcountry ethnic groups.

He acknowledged that in many parts of the parish, primary evangelization would have been the necessary mode of religious outreach to the Giriama. Fr. Don Donovan, who replaced McCue as pastor in 1990, and remained in Kilifi till 1999, likewise said that primary evangelization was required in many places. He stated:

Kilifi could be a very interesting assignment for an associate Maryknoll priest who might be interested in doing primary evangelization. He would not have to live way out in the bush, but could live in the town as his base. He could go out to the Giriama villages as often as he liked, even living in a village for a period of time. Or, he could do traditional parish work here in Kilifi. This is an unusual parish, in offering two very divergent types of mission work right in one place. Normally, in East Africa one has to go out to a remote, rural place to do primary evangelization.

With regard to primary evangelization, TenHoopen talked about a Giriama man from one of their outstations, who was later ordained and then tragically died in a matatu (passenger vehicle) accident a few years later.

He was the first person in his area to be baptized, followed by his whole family. He had a way about him that he could really touch people, I don't know how. People saw that he was very God-like and he drew in many people from his area to become Christians. He would have been ideal for evangelization among the Giriama, if it had not been for that accident.

In the mid-1980s TenHoopen was made Director of OTP, and three Brother candidates were successively assigned to Kilifi (one lasted only one month, and left Maryknoll). The first was John Rieschick, who began in Tudor in Mombasa, but was soon moved to Kilifi. TenHoopen thought that there was not enough to do in the city of Mombasa, as people are either at work or school every weekday. Tudor was good for language practice, but it was difficult to find pastoral work to do in the daytime. There were many more pastoral opportunities in Kilifi. According to TenHoopen:

Within a week or two he was leading the *Ibadas* (Sunday services without a priest) in the outstations. He didn't preach – I would preach – but would lead the service. John was good at language and picked up Swahili very quickly. This was a good assignment for him because he had something to keep him busy.

He was followed by Loren Beaudry, who at first went to Bura Parish in Garissa Diocese. After six months, TenHoopen felt the same about this assignment, that there was not enough to do in Bura, and he brought Beaudry to Kilifi at just about the time Rieschick was returning to the U.S., in June of 1986. Beaudry commented:

Kilifi was a true African town, with a slow pace, women carrying wood and water on their heads, Swahili women doing farm work together in the fields, and people willing to chat for a few minutes. It was not westernized like Nairobi.

Despite his time in language school and in Bura, Beaudry was still finding language difficult, yet he was expected to lead *ibadas* and even give sermons. McCue would sit down with him every week to help Beaudry prepare a sermon. TenHoopen said, "I was happy Phil did that, because at that time I had taken over all the parish administration – accounts, building, etc. – and was very busy." Beaudry also helped organize some activities for the youth of the parish, such as sports. Both Rieschick and Beaudry had good experiences in Kilifi, and returned to Kenya after finishing formation in the U.S., Rieschick to Amani Counseling Centre in Nairobi and Beaudry to Makadara Parish in Nairobi. Two other OTP Brothers also came to Kilifi briefly, Larry Leslie and Chuck Hutchinson, but both left Maryknoll.

In 1990, just when the new bridge was finished connecting Kilifi directly with the highway to Mombasa, a development which caused rapid expansion of business establishments in Kilifi, Bishop Kirima was made Archbishop of Nyeri in central Kenya, and Bishop John Njenga was transferred from Eldoret to become Archbishop of Mombasa. Njenga and McCue had had irreconcilable differences in Eldoret ten years earlier, which both remembered all too well, and Njenga told the Kenya Regional

Superior, John Conway, to remove McCue from Kilifi. McCue willingly went to Umoja Parish in Nairobi. He had been in Kilifi almost ten full years and realized that this was a fortuitous opportunity to go somewhere else, a place much less taxing than Kilifi.

Njenga also did not approve of a Brother leading communion services in outstations every Sunday, preaching and wearing an alb while doing so. The Kenya Bishops had been extremely resistant to any inclusion of laity, including educated catechists who had completed the year-long course at Gaba Catechetical Center, in any sacramental role. Njenga viewed Brother Frank TenHoopen's sacramental activities as usurping roles restricted for clerics only. Kenya's Bishops have also strongly resisted establishing a program for training married deacons, who could preside over communion services without a priest, both at outstations and in the parish centers. This resistance has persevered despite a continuing lack of priests, given the many outstations that one or two priests in a parish have to cover. As a result, most Kenya Catholics receive communion only once a month, sometimes less, especially in rainy seasons. Of course, the Bishops don't seem to mind at all that untrained catechists are preaching at thousands of outstation services each Sunday. As for Kilifi, Njenga asked Maryknoll to assign two priests, and asked TenHoopen to take over the Diocesan Youth Office in Mombasa. (This work will be discussed in Part Seven.)

To replace them, first Fr. Don Donovan came to Kilifi as the new pastor, joined almost immediately by Fr. Jim Roy. Donovan had worked on Promotion in the U.S. after ordination and then was assigned to Tanzania in 1959. With the exception of two years in Dar es Salaam, he worked in Luo parishes of North Mara in Musoma Diocese up till 1986. He then was assigned to Kenya and worked in Umoja Parish for three years. At the end of 1989 he went to Maryknoll's relatively new commitment in Athi River Parish, twenty miles east of Nairobi, but had been there only a little over half a year when it was necessary to transfer him to Kilifi to replace Phil McCue. As was seen above, Roy had been in Tudor Parish in Mombasa city till 1986, then in northwest Kenya for less than a year. In June of 1988 he went to Marafa Parish some 120 kilometres north of Kilifi (c.f. below). Both Donovan and Roy arrived in Kilifi in May, 1990. Both were very experienced pastors and expert in Swahili. Donovan remained as pastor till 1999, when Maryknoll turned the parish over to the diocese.

According to Donovan:

Kilifi is a traditional type parish, with most of the time taken up with routine sacramental work, instruction of children and adults, and trying to build up the SCCs in the town area. Most of the Catholics in the town were upcountry people, so there were a lot of Catholics. The real challenge of the parish was in the rural areas, trying to interest the Giriama in Christian religion. They have always resisted religious change and still do.

Another challenge was co-existence with the Muslims in the town, since the parish compound was surrounded by the Swahili village, many of whom were quite poor. It has been easy to have good relationships with middle-class and wealthy Muslims in the coastal area, but poor Muslims are not well educated, either in academic subjects or in Islam, and are therefore defensive. They do not welcome or even seek opportunities to relate with educated Christians from overseas. Donovan also mentioned "the loudspeaker

beamed right at the church, a very bothersome thing that takes quite a while to get used to.” However, during his time in Kilifi relations with the Muslims gradually improved, in great part due to Donovan’s easy-going personality and clever wit.

He said that relations with town officials, such as those in civil service, the police, doctors and nurses, were very good. Partly this was because many were from upcountry where all the Maryknollers had previously worked, and whose culture and ways of thinking they were accustomed to. Some of the town government workers were among the best Catholics in the parish.

Jim Roy was in Kilifi only two years, replaced by Fr. Jim Kuhn in 1992. Kuhn had worked in Tanzania (also with the Luo) for many years, in Zambia for a couple of years, and had been in Bura Parish in Garissa from 1984 to 1992 (c.f. below). Maryknoll had turned over Bura to new missionaries from the Diocese of Bismark, North Dakota, in 1991, freeing Kuhn for another assignment. Roy was very happy to be able to go back to Marafa Parish.

Roy commented that he appreciated coming to a parish that was set up so well, and he especially commended the leadership training courses held at the pastoral center three times a year, which he and Donovan continued.

We also developed the adult catechumenate in different places. All the catechists were paid, but we began finding new people who were willing to be volunteers, helping to teach the catechumens. We were also able to get plots for some new places and build more outstations.

In 1991 they were joined by Brother Tim Raible, who began full-time ministry with youth. Raible had worked in the Philippines, coming to Kenya in 1990. After four months of language school and practice, he went in mid-1990 to Mombasa to assist Ten Hoopen to start the Youth Office. “After six months in Mombasa, where I started a diocesan youth newspaper, Fr. John Conway, the Regional Superior asked me to go to Kilifi. This was the first time that anyone had attempted to engage in organized youth ministry in Kilifi Parish.” He promoted youth involvement in three ways: first with youth programs throughout the parish, primarily in the outstations, secondly by spending a lot of time at the Agricultural College where he made many contacts and developed a strong Young Catholic Student (YCS) group, and thirdly by forming YCS groups in various secondary schools under Kilifi Parish.

The youth in the schools felt a lot of pressure about their faith. At that time Muslims were putting up mosques every five kilometers, both along the coast and in the hinterlands. Pentecostals were also coming in and putting up chapels. The youth were mainly first-generation Catholics, being mostly Giriama. The YCS was a good response to their concerns. It helped organize them and gave them a Catholic identity.

In the outstations the small Christian communities (SCCs) also included the youth in activities. I did many things with the youth, in each of the eight or nine outstations we had at that time. We would have day-long reflections or retreats in each outstation, about two to four times a year, depending on their location and on what they were asking for. Occasionally we would have

something for youth at the pastoral centre at the parish, but I mainly scheduled youth programs in the outstations.

I let the youth decide on the topics. We had day-long programs on AIDS education, on human biology – I was surprised how little they knew about human biology – on basic leadership skills training, and on basic Christian teaching. They had many questions about being a Catholic, since they had not had a good catechesis. There were many other topics as well.

After two years in Kilifi, Raible left to take the Spiritual Renewal Program in Israel. Two men had become good youth leaders by then, and Raible felt they could carry on the youth work. One, Felix Thuva, had moved into Kilifi town and had begun working not only with youth but with young adults. He continued this work for quite a few years afterward. Another man helped Raible with youth work for several years and then joined the Benedictines in Nairobi.

Fr. Jim Kuhn was in Kilifi only about two years, at which time he was diagnosed with lung cancer and had to return to the U.S. for treatment. When he left, Donovan remained alone in Kilifi. He made the decision to retire in 1999, and a transition period was set up of turning the parish over to the diocese. Donovan retired in Mombasa city, and helped out in various parishes on weekends until health concerns forced him to return to the United States in 2007.

Kilifi saw a burst of growth in the 1990s, after the opening of the new bridge. However, in the first decade of the new century it appeared to be returning to the sleepy, small village it was in 1980. The cashew nut plant had closed, incomes had declined, and hopes that Kilifi could benefit from the tourist market never materialized. The business part of the town moved out to the main Malindi-Mombasa road, very near the university. The central part of Kilifi Town, which used to be the business center, is now primarily a large bus station, packed not only with buses and *matatus* (vans that carry passengers) but also a new form of passenger transportation that has burgeoned in Kenya recently – the *boda boda*, a motor scooter that can carry up to two passengers and a small amount of baggage.

Since 1999 there have been one or two diocesan priests doing parish ministry in Kilifi. On June 2, 2000, a new diocese was erected in Malindi, just sixty kilometers north of Kilifi, but Kilifi remained in Mombasa Archdiocese. In 2010 official statistics state that fewer than five percent of the population of the territory covered by Kilifi Parish are Catholic.

There have been several major developments at the parish compound in the intervening twelve years since Maryknoll handed the parish back to the Archdiocese. Around the year 2000 a new two-story rectory was built, on the opposite side of the church from the old rectory, which remains but is used merely for storage now. Fr. Anthony Ngwatu, the current pastor, was of the belief that Maryknoll built the new rectory before leaving the parish. More likely Maryknoll helped with funding, although it was built after Donovan left.

After the new rectory was built, the congregation of the Sisters of Mary Mother of God took up residence at the former rectory, until they built their own convent. The former pastoral centre on the parish compound was converted to a primary and nursery

school and many new classrooms were added to it. The Sisters work in the schools. One Precious Blood Sister also lives with them in the convent and works in the District Hospital.

Fr. Ngwatu says that the parish is trying to build a new two-story primary school on a five-acre plot bought by a former pastor of Kilifi four miles away on the road to Malindi. This will be a private Catholic school managed by the priests in Kilifi. Once the new school opens, the primary school on the parish compound will close, except for the nursery school, to be replaced by computer classes or other courses for school-leavers. Construction of the new school is coming along very slowly, however, due to lack of finances.

As of mid-2010 there were two priests stationed in the parish, but each of them teaches in Pwani University, the former agricultural college that was raised to university level. The Assistant priest is a full-time teacher, whereas Ngwatu, who has a PhD in Public Health from Duquesne University in the U.S, teaches part-time. Ngwatu acknowledges that their university duties take away from time that should be devoted to pastoral duties in the parish. There are sixteen outstations in the parish and the two priests try to reach all for Sunday Mass at least once a month. Four of the outstations, however, which are a long distance from Kilifi, beyond the national forest reserve, are lumped together as one for the monthly Sunday Mass. Each month the Mass is held in a different outstation on a revolving basis. To serve all these places, one of the priests says all three Masses at Kilifi on Sunday and the other goes to three outstations.

Ngwatu says that just in Kilifi town there are important pastoral needs that they can not serve and could use a third priest.

There are two large educational institutions here that need a full-time chaplain, namely the university and the Medical Training College attached to the District Hospital. KEMRI (Kenya Medical Research Institute) has a large facility here doing research on malaria and malaria prevention and it is possible that the cashew nut factory will be revived. Thus, there is need for a lot of pastoral work to be done with the educated people living in the town, in addition to going out to outstations. We definitely need a third priest in this parish, first and foremost to be a university chaplain.

A visit by a Maryknoll priest with Fr. Ngwatu in mid-2010 also elicited an intriguing invitation – that Maryknoll open a new parish at a place called Ganze, about twenty-five miles west of Kilifi, out in the middle of Giriama country. The Archdiocese of Mombasa already owns one large plot there, plus several other fairly large plots that could be sold to buy more land next to the first plot. Another twelve miles beyond Ganze is the small town of Bamba, and these two towns would be the nuclei of the new parish. The road to Ganze is gravel and is usually passable even during rainy months, especially if the missionaries have four-wheel drive. Ngwatu says that Swahili would be the language of the new parish, although it seems that in such an overwhelmingly Giriama area knowledge of the local language would be very helpful.

This is exactly the type of area that traditionally fit Maryknoll criteria: poor, undeveloped, opportunities for primary evangelization, probably in need of re-catechesis of the Catholics, and requiring building up all parish structures. Perhaps if it were thirty

years earlier, around 1980, two to four Maryknoll priests/Brothers and several Lay Missioners could have been assigned to Ganze, with at least two of them expected to learn the Giriama language. In 2011, it seems beyond Maryknoll's ability to even think of something like this.

It should also be noted that in 2011 it seems that parish work also means building many buildings on the parish compound: not only a rectory, church and pastoral center/social hall, but also a primary and a secondary school, at least one convent, a medical health clinic, a set of classrooms for courses for school-leavers, and whatever else the missionary society would like to build. Given the need for four-wheel drive vehicles and the long distances from shopping areas, the mission in Ganze would need a great deal of money each year. This was the mission practice of much of the twentieth century; whether this will be possible in the new century remains to be seen.

Kilifi Parish has been in existence for going on fifty years and is an established part of the town and district. The town parish is another example of a mature parish and much good work has been done in the outstations, for which Maryknoll can take a lot of credit. As noted by many who worked in Kilifi, though, it has many needs that require a variety of very different skills, which the Kenya Church is trying to meet but finding difficult. It is an open question whether a Church that restricts ministry to priests and Religious, all of whom must remain celibate, will be able to respond to these needs as this new century unfolds.

St. Joseph Parish, Marafa

After working on Maryknoll Promotion in the U.S. for six years, Fr. Tom Donnelly returned to Kenya in 1987 and was requested by the Regional Council to accept assignment to a very rural, undeveloped parish in the northern part of Mombasa Diocese, called Marafa. This is located approximately forty kilometers from the city of Malindi, and is thirty kilometers inland from the Indian Ocean coast. There is a dirt and gravel road going up into the low hills where Marafa is nestled, a road that could be very difficult to pass during heavy rain. The area is populated mainly by Giriama, but there are people of other tribes in the small town of Marafa, and in the nearby Magarini resettlement scheme. People practice mixed agriculture, which include drought resistant crops such as cassava and sorghum, but also maize. It is also an excellent place to grow pineapples. Farming depends on rain, which is unpredictable even in the hills inland from the coast. It is very hot and humid throughout the year, which Donnelly, as for most Maryknoll newcomers to Kenya's coast, found difficult to adapt to. Official statistics state that there are 5,100 people living within a radius of seven kilometers from Marafa town, indicating a population density of only 86 people per square mile, and it is even more sparsely populated once a distance out of Marafa town. With the exception of the Turkana desert in northern Kenya, this parish had the fewest people and fewest Catholics of any in which Maryknoll worked in Kenya.

Donnelly arrived in Marafa on March 17, 1987, a date that anyone of Irish nationality easily remembers. "My first impression was that this was not really a parish, but just a poor outstation." In a sense, this was true, since the last priest there had left in 1983 leaving the parish vacant. It was being served as an outstation from Malindi, receiving Sunday Mass maybe once a month. The parish had been started in 1972 by

Holy Ghost Father James Lynch, who chose the plot and built a small rectory and chapel. After he left, another priest came, but for only a few years.

Donnelly was joined a short time later, first by newly ordained Fr. Ron Green and in June, 1987, by Brother Loren Beaudry who was on OTP. One of their first tasks was to fix up the rectory, including adding some rooms, repair walls in the church, and put solar panels on the roof of the rectory for electricity. Water was a difficult problem in the beginning, and remained a problem throughout their stay. For most of the time, they had to haul water in large plastic barrels from a local river (and hope that there was always water in the river). They also set about building chapels in outstations, which were quite a distance from the parish. One was on the edge of Tsavo National Park sixty kilometers (thirty-seven miles) away.

In addition to the physical difficulties of the place and the enervating heat, Donnelly also felt his Swahili was not sufficient. For his first fifteen years he had spoken only Luo, a Nilotic language. Swahili is a Bantu language, with a very different syntax and vocabulary. Many of those who started in Luo found difficulty switching over to Swahili later in life. (Conversely, those who first learned a Bantu tribal language found Swahili an easy language to learn.) After some months in Marafa Donnelly made another discovery. "It wasn't too long before I realized that you really need to operate in Giriama, and at my age I did not think I could learn another language."

Despite these challenges, he mentioned some positive aspects of mission in Marafa.

First, there is a great opportunity to do real missionary work here, among people who hadn't been evangelized. This was far different than any place I had been, in either Tanzania or Kenya. The Giriama are a very traditional people and I admire them for that. They are not interested in Christianity. This is why the Giriama language is necessary, as well as knowledge of their customs and religious beliefs. They are very reserved as a people, not interested in getting to know strangers, and very secretive about their animistic religious practices. I was there only a short time and those were things I did not learn, unfortunately. But knowing these things is essential.

Another good thing was the cooperation we had in schools. Teachers and Headmasters in every school, whether Catholic or not, and even the officers in the education offices, were all open to teaching religion in schools. We provided them books, but in fact after we left the teachers usually did not follow up with the teaching. I was returning to a school only after two or three months, not often enough to keep things going. There were many schools. But I did appreciate their cooperative spirit, even changing the time and date for the pastoral program to suit us, and inviting us for Mass in the school.

A very irritating part of their mission in Marafa was a rental situation started by the second pastor, at the parish compound and at some of the outstations. To assist with financial self-reliance he had built row houses which he rented out. Unfortunately, most of the renters were not Catholic, and while the parish was vacant, they had gotten used to not paying monthly rent. A parish committee was supposed to collect the rent, but they were not turning it in to the priest. Donnelly explained:

This created enormous friction and infighting, with people stealing the rent money. It was a mess. I've never been in a mission where you started with that kind of a millstone around your neck. It was a real distraction to mission work and I wish it had been cleared up before we arrived.

This lasted for the first year or two, but eventually the priests severed all relationship with the rental houses. In 1989, shortly before he left Marafa, Green said that "we are now calling these rentals, at least at the main parish, out of service." Green spoke prematurely, however; the parish council never officially abolished the parish control over the rental houses and in 2010 the council still considered itself the owner of the houses. However, Fr. Anthony Mwanzia, Assistant Pastor in 2010, said that the occupants of the rental houses are mainly students at Marafa Secondary School, a day school, and in fact do not pay rent. The priests consider this a form of service to the local community.

One of the most interesting facts about Marafa is the presence of a deep limestone crater in the edge of town, very close to the parish compound. Slow but unremitting erosion is causing the crater to constantly expand. Donnelly once pointed out to a visitor how the crater – popularly called 'Hell's Kitchen' by local people – would eventually extend to the church and rectory without firm efforts to stop the erosion. By 2010 this problem had become so severe that the government decided to move all administration offices to a small village five miles east of Marafa, where there is an Administration Police camp. The priests at Marafa are also considering moving the mission to the same town.

At the same time, the depression has put Marafa on the tourist map, with its own website. Almost every day tourists visiting the Malindi area (almost all Italian) take the fifty mile round-trip journey to Marafa to view and take pictures of the depression. So common has this become that any White person traveling to Marafa hears constant greetings of 'Chao' shouted out by children along the road. The Italian tourists give the children candy and have also donated money to worthy causes in Marafa, making them very welcome to that tiny town. When the priests stationed in Marafa in 2010 heard that Marafa has an international website they said they will add a link, inviting the Italian tourists to attend Mass in Marafa.

Loren Beaudry had been in East Africa for two years when he arrived in Marafa and was slowly becoming somewhat more proficient in Swahili, but continued to put in a lot of time in language learning and practice. He established relations with the local parish youth, starting a rabbit project for older youth and organizing a soccer league. He had an additional ministry of significance to the parish.

I used to go out to the villages to visit Catholics who no longer came to church. I wanted to find out what the problem was and to encourage them to resume church attendance. I was still conservative then and thought that regular church-going was necessary for salvation. I discovered that the Giriama were very indifferent about religious practices. The people I visited were all Catholics, but they really didn't care whether they went to Mass or not.

This was one of the objectives of our overall parish plan. I appreciated living with Donnelly and Green, since we were trying to form objectives for our work in Marafa, such as getting people to return to church. These objectives gave me an incentive to go out and visit people.

In June, 1988, Beaudry returned to Maryknoll, NY, for the integration year before final oath. He studied at the College of New Rochelle and did ministry in the South Bronx.

In 1988 Donnelly developed very painful kidney stones and returned to the U.S. for treatment. He was also having problems with his heart, which fortunately turned out not to be serious. But on his return to Kenya in early 1989, he did not go back to Marafa, but instead to the parish of Athi River near Nairobi. He had never adapted to the humid heat of the coast, and was happy to be in a drier place. He was replaced at Marafa by Jim Roy, who had just finished a sabbatical course in Rome. Roy came in June, 1988, and later described his initial stay.

When I arrived it was raining, which made it nice, except for travel on some of the roads. Ron Green was pastor. He and Donnelly had completed some important things, such as renovations at the mission and building in outstations. Ron and I devoted much of our time to setting up volunteer catechists and providing formation to others in leadership positions. There were some adults who wanted to be baptized and children who sought First Communion. However, as others have noted, I too found the Giriama people very reserved. They were not at all anti-American. It is better to term it a passive anti-foreignism, which extended to anything foreign brought in. They have a whole history of being anti-Arab, anti-Islam, for four hundred years. Islam has a cultural imperialism about it and the Giriama resisted this. But as a result, they were also not open to the Catholic Church in any way. About the only group drawn to new religions were the educated group, such as teachers, who have joined the Pentecostal Church.

In July, 1989, Ron Green had an incident that left him badly wounded and he returned permanently to the U.S. Roy continued on till 1990, in order to fulfill the three-year contract, but was then directed by the Regional Superior, Fr. John Conway, to move to Kilifi Parish (c.f. above). For two years Marafa reverted to being an outstation of Malindi.

In late 1992, Roy was able to return to Marafa again, but only on the condition that Archbishop Njenga assign an African diocesan priest to be with him. Njenga consented, and assigned Fr. Daniel Miyana to join Roy. The Archdiocese also agreed to provide a vehicle to Miyana and financial support for his room, board and travel expenses. Unlike Tudor Parish, where parishioners paid for everything, Marafa was so poor it could not provide support for even one African priest.

On this assignment, Roy tried to discover the secret of the Pentecostal attraction for the Giriama. He attended several Pentecostal services, and commented about one:

It lasted over four hours, and there were three collections. At one point they prayed in tongues for a half hour. I had no idea how the leader was going to stop this praying, but it finally calmed down. Then they sang a few songs and had more bible readings. After the prayer service they had food, like an agape meal, enough for everybody. What impressed me were the number of young people there, although more male than female, and a good number of teachers. Some secondary school students were there. In our Catholic Church in Marafa Town we had very few attending Mass. I have been trying to investigate why this is so.

Roy stayed at Marafa for three more years, till the end of 1995, and then completed his time in Mombasa Archdiocese. Maryknoll ceased its commitment to Marafa Parish, and in just four years it also concluded its final parish commitment in Mombasa, at Kilifi. In 1996, Roy moved to Athi River Parish, near Nairobi – a huge climatic change for him, as he had been living in the coastal heat for fifteen years. Marafa Parish was handed back to the Archdiocese of Mombasa which has assigned one or two diocesan priests there since then. In 2010 Fr. Anthony Mwanzia was interviewed at Marafa and mentioned that the people of Marafa still remember Jim Roy and the efforts he made in the spiritual guidance of the people.

In 1989, Tom Donnelly reflected on the challenges of evangelization amongst the Giriama, partly exhibiting some lingering remorse that his physical problems forced his premature departure from Marafa.

I would prefer that we (i.e. Maryknoll in Kenya) not be locked only in urban ministry. To be in areas that are crying for evangelization is still extremely important. You can talk about the hundreds of thousands of people in the city, but many of them were catechized in rural areas. They've moved to the city and are dropping out of the Church, even losing their faith. Our Society wasn't founded to be pastoral agents in the sense of pastors of established parishes. It was to go to the missions to preach the Gospel to people who haven't heard it. But in Africa we are taking big parishes in urban areas. This can be called second evangelization and there's a need for that. However, the only honest to God missions, where we preach to the unevangelized, are places like Turkana, Garissa and Marafa.

My thoughts are that we should have taken two or three parishes only in Giriama areas. We should never have gone to the city of Mombasa; there we just dissipated our energies. If we had young Maryknollers, they would learn Giriama. They would become known as missionaries for that language, similar to what we had in Luo work in Tanzania. Since they would be a fairly large community – not all living in one place, but in several places in proximity – then they could share experiences and reinforce each other. This is not possible when you have one mission in Garissa, one in Turkana, and one somewhere else far away.

This opinion comes in part from my experience in Burnt Forest, where Maryknoll had only one parish. The Kiltigans said to me, "You Maryknollers

have a lot of ideas that we don't necessarily approve of, but they're new and you try them. Some are successful, some are not. It's too bad you didn't take another parish. Then you would have exerted a stronger influence."

It's true that I personally was not able to stay in Marafa. But if Maryknoll as a group had taken the Giriama area, then Maryknoll could have persevered in its commitment to this people and language, and to primary evangelization. But now Marafa is just cut off. I think we weaken ourselves in this way.

As valuable as these insights are, in fact inexorable demographic change was making it impossible for Maryknoll to even consider such a mission approach. In 1990, Maryknoll was responsible for ten parishes in Kenya, including the Kenyatta University chaplaincy. By 2000, Maryknoll was responsible only for Dunholm (which it left in 2005) and the Kenyatta University parish, which was first and foremost a university chaplaincy and only a parish secondarily. In 1990, the great majority of Maryknoll priests working in parishes were over age sixty, with several others just under sixty. All were very good in Swahili, the language of urban Kenya, and all had extensive experience in rural Africa, which helps immeasurably for understanding the urban African situation. Urban areas, especially Nairobi, were expanding exponentially, and it seemed that these opportunities matched Maryknollers' skills perfectly.

At Maryknoll, New York, ordinations had dropped to only two to four a year – for the whole world. It would have been impossible to have found personnel for primary evangelization in Kenya, which necessitated learning a tribal language. Perhaps, if evangelization to the Giriama had been the priority in 1980, the Kenya Region could have found at least five, to maybe even eight, to undertake such a mission. A number of recently ordained would have had to be assigned to Kenya. Already in 1980, most of those moving to Kenya from Tanzania were over the age of fifty, and looking for less physically-taxing ministries in urban rather than in rural areas. But in the 1980s concentrating in one area to do primary evangelization was never considered in the Kenya Region, and by 1990 it was too late. There is also no assurance that if Maryknoll assigned six Maryknollers to one specific area (two or three parishes) that half of them would not have withdrawn after just a few years, for various reasons.

As of 2010, Marafa Parish was being staffed by two diocesan priests, Frs. Michael Babu and Anthony Mwanzia, both of whom arrived in 2009, shortly after Mwanzia had been ordained. Babu is the third pastor that Marafa has had since Jim Roy left at the end of 1995. The previous one, who was at Marafa from 2000 to 2009, is popularly known as Fr. Big Ben, and he is now the pastor in the neighboring parish of Gongoni right at the coast.

Marafa is still a very small parish in terms of numbers of Catholics, although it is quite large in territory. It has nine outstations, with one of them sixty kilometers (37 miles) away. There is only one Mass at the parish on Sunday, at 9:00 AM, in the new, larger church built in 2008. Even though it is not a very large church, there are still not enough Catholics to fill it on Sunday. Since the parish has only one vehicle, one priest says Mass at the parish and the other goes out to outstations, perhaps two on a Sunday. Most of the Catholics at Mass in Marafa are from various government institutions, such as the Division Headquarters and two Administration Police posts nearby.

Diocesan priests look on Marafa as a hardship posting, primarily because it is so poor, not merely the poorest in the diocese, but arguably one of the poorest parishes in the whole country. The Sunday collection at the parish church is only \$10.00 a week, and outstations bring in another \$6.00 a week. Given that the four-wheel-drive vehicle the parish owns is old and prone to breaking down, parish income can not possibly pay for transport costs and barely even pay for the priests' food. The parish had a fund-raising in 2010 with hopes to raise enough to buy a motorcycle, making it easier and cheaper to go to outstations. The Diocese may supply a stipend for living expenses, although it is not known how much nor if it is really adequate. This is probably a parish that needs to be staffed by an expatriate missionary society that has sufficient resources to fully care for the priests. As was noted above, even the Maryknollers who were assigned there found it to be a difficult place.

In June, 2000, Marafa became part of the new Diocese of Malindi. Malindi Diocese runs north and south along the Kenya coast from fifteen miles south of Malindi to Lamu, about 100 miles north of Malindi. The diocese has a total population of 550,000, of which only 22,000 are Catholic. (These are the official statistics of the Kenya Catholic Secretariat. The editor of this history believes that the Catholic population should be higher than this, given that two parishes, Malindi itself and Mpekatoni, have a relatively large number of parishioners. It could be that these two parishes have two-thirds to three-fourths of all Catholics in the Diocese.) Although many people living right next to the coast are Muslim, the rural areas truly remain mission territory.

If the decision is made to move the parish to another place safe from the geological depression then the Diocese will have to provide all funding for the new parish facilities. The first Bishop of Malindi was a Capuchin who died of heart failure in November, 2009, and as of the end of 2010 no new Bishop had yet been appointed. The Capuchin Bishop was from Malta and had access to funds from overseas. In fact, an Italian organization, which locally calls itself *Karibuni*, a Swahili word meaning Welcome, built several classrooms at the parish in Marafa, which are used for nursery/kindergarten school (three years) and also by the parish on weekends. It is probably recognized that Malindi Diocese is a poor, marginalized diocese – with the exception of the city of Malindi itself – and will need another Bishop with access to foreign funds. Two expatriate mission groups are working in the diocese: the Capuchins and the Mill Hill Society. The presumption is that one of these orders will supply the next Bishop, but it is possible that none of the priests of these orders is willing to be Bishop. Thus, the Kenya Church may be looking for a Kenyan priest to take on what would be a challenging position as Bishop of Malindi.

Bomu Parish

A heavily traveled causeway links Mombasa Island with the western mainland. This is the beginning of the east-west Pan-African Highway. (The Congo rainforest prevents it from reaching the Atlantic Ocean.) The causeway, with two lanes on each side, is inveterately filled with pot-holes, melted asphalt, and boulders blocking off lanes due for repair. Huge lorries, buses, innumerable private passenger vans (called *matatus* in Kenya), and occasional cars daily maneuver their way across the causeway, into and out of Mombasa. As the island was already by 1960 densely populated with Swahili and

Arab people – plus a smattering of those of Indian and European descent, and middle-class Africans from either the Coast or upcountry – the first place that new migrants to Mombasa moved was the western mainland. (In 1980, the new Nyali Bridge likewise opened up the north coast to rapid growth.)

The immediate section on the mainland is called Changamwe, and is the location of the oil refinery, the Kenya Meat factory, many assembly plants, and the modern, international airport. In the 1980s Export Processing Zone (EPZ) factories were also started. This became a working-class neighborhood, grew densely populated, and occasioned the further planned development of housing estates for working- and lower middle-class residents. This whole area became tribally very mixed, although Muslims and members of various Mijikenda tribes tended to have the plurality of the population.

In 1963 Holy Ghost Fathers established a large Catholic parish in Changamwe, which served the whole population in that area for over twenty years. By the 1980s the population had grown tremendously, and in 1987 the parish was subdivided into four sections, with new parishes established in Miritini and Mikindani along the Nairobi highway, and in Bomu, near the airport. Bomu got its name from a story about a large hole in the ground, purportedly caused by a bomb dropped by an Italian plane during the Second World War. Holy Ghost priests went to the two new parishes along the Nairobi highway, and Maryknoll was asked to accept responsibility for Bomu. This was one of the poorest sections of Changamwe, with terrible dirt roads winding into the area, and no existing church structures.

Fr. Mike Callanan, who had previously worked in Jericho Parish in Nairobi, was the first to go to Bomu, and was shortly afterwards assisted by Fr. Joe Trainor who was staying in Kikambala Parish north of Mombasa. There was neither church nor church plot in Bomu, and delays in getting a plot of land became quite complicated. The Diocese was trying to buy land from a Muslim businessman whose family had long roots in the area. Lack of money and constant delays in determining the plot's boundaries prevented any construction from getting underway, and after less than a year Callanan returned to Nairobi. In the months he was pastor of Bomu he had gone around to all the small neighborhoods of the parish and met almost all the Catholics. He left the parish very well liked by the Catholics, who continued to remember him for years afterwards.

Trainor had become used to the heat of Mombasa and liked its slower pace. He first lived in Changamwe and later moved to the apartment in Tudor previously occupied by Fr. Al Smidlein, who had developed terminal cancer and had to return to the U.S. Trainor was over sixty in age and was willing to tolerate the frustrations of Bomu Parish's chaotic beginnings. He commented on the beginning of Maryknoll's presence in Bomu:

Mike Callanan had only \$2,000, which enabled him to merely lay out plans for the foundation and put up pillars. I decided, though to get something finished. We had to pay rent every week for space in a small elementary school in order to celebrate Mass. So I put up a building that was thirty feet by seventy feet, and put in some benches. It was crowded. As soon as we built it, we knew we should have made it bigger. Bishop Lele came and blessed this church, and remarked how good it was to have at least this. He gave money for more benches.

One unfortunate problem with the building was that one edge extended ten feet or so outside the allocated land boundaries. This required sensitive negotiations between the Diocese and the local government authorities. Trainor continued living at the apartment in Tudor, commuting to Bomu on Sundays and visiting a hospital in Changamwe during the week.

In late 1990, Archbishop Njenga, who had just become Archbishop of Mombasa, asked Trainor to cover Wundanyi Parish in the Taita Hills over a hundred miles from Mombasa. Trainor did not like this assignment, but accepted it, as he explains:

Apparently, Njenga was brought to Mombasa to clean it up. Some of the diocesan priests were not living up to expectations and Archbishop Njenga sent eleven of them overseas for programs and further education. It became hit and miss trying to cover all the empty parishes. I was one of those available, so the Bishop thought he could use me as a fill-in priest. But I found adjustment to the cold mountain climate of Taita difficult.

Trainor remained in Wundanyi for five months till mid-1991, and then went to the United States for his fortieth anniversary. On his return he went to Umoja Parish in Nairobi for one year and then permanently returned to the United States.

Njenga assigned Brother Frank TenHoopen, who had recently left Kilifi Parish to become Director of the diocesan Youth Office, to be administrator of Bomu Parish. In the Archbishop's opinion Bomu was a Maryknoll commitment, even if there was no Maryknoll priest available. He presumed that Maryknoll would assign a priest and kept insisting on this to the Kenya Region. Naturally, he could not have understood that in 1991 Maryknoll in Kenya was beginning its rapid decline in numbers, making it very difficult to find someone. Two other issues discouraged Maryknoll priests from considering Bomu: previous conflict between Maryknollers and Archbishop Njenga, and the chaotic, unplanned manner in which Bomu Parish had been begun. For several years, TenHoopen had to request and schedule various priests (usually diocesan) to say the Sunday Masses and hear confessions on Saturday. He also had charge of the financial and catechetical aspects of the parish, but due to his youth work did not have much time to give to the parish. While he was administrator, construction on a new church was begun. Finally, in 1992 a diocesan priest was assigned to Bomu Parish, freeing Maryknoll of any further responsibility. Several years later the Apostles of Jesus Missionary Society took charge of Bomu Parish and have remained there ever since.

In 2010 there were two Apostles of Jesus priests stationed in Bomu, originally from other parts of Kenya. The parish now has a huge, very well constructed and beautiful church, in which three Masses are celebrated every Sunday (two Swahili, one English) and two Masses every weekday. The priests also visit Small Christian Communities (SCCs) several times during the week. The former church, built by Joe Trainor, is now the parish hall – and still protrudes into the road that runs beside the parish plot, although this land case has long since been resolved. During the week the hall is used as a nursery school.

There is no space for parking at the parish compound, except for one or two cars that might come during the week. The roads in Bomu are still as terrible today as in 1987

when the parish was just beginning. Since Bomu is not a big area parishioners can more easily walk to the church on Sunday rather than drive.

The priests' main work in the parish is "apostolic," although there is also an office in the back of the church for the Community Health AIDS Program, started by MM Brother John Mullen. Bomu was the first parish in which he worked, which will be covered in Part Six, and he is still fondly remembered by the nurse and social worker currently working at Bomu. (He is also remembered with a great sense of sadness, as Mullen died in April, 2010, just a few months before a Maryknoll priest visited the AIDS Program.)

The parish today has a very nice rectory, with three or four bedrooms, although it is just moderate size. Outside the rectory is a covered waiting area, for people coming to see a priest. The priests don't have an office, so people talk to the priest either in the outdoor waiting area or in some cases in the living room. In July, 2010, the parish was building a large, circular bell tower, which will have a stairway to the top, an office at each level, and toilets and washrooms at the ground level for parishioner use on Sundays.

St. Stephen Parish in Bomu is now a well established parish, although far from being affluent. It is located in a working class area that contains many poor people and few if any upper middle-class households. It is a parish that is not dissimilar to urban working-class parishes that existed in the U.S. in the early 1900s. This is precisely the kind of area in which the Church needs to have a stable, serving presence.

Education work in Mombasa Archdiocese

In 1981 and 1982 Fathers Al Smidlein and John Conway were assigned to the Diocese of Mombasa, each for several ministries. Smidlein stayed in Mombasa for six years or slightly more, till the end of 1987 when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He had three jobs in the diocese: teacher, expert on Islam, and facilitator of seminars for primary school teachers. His teaching job was in moral theology, primarily at Aga Khan High School, arguably the top boys' high school in Mombasa. According to Fr. Joe Trainor, Smidlein taught also at several other secondary schools, teaching upper classes moral theology. His constant study of and research into Islam has been mentioned above in the section on Tudor Parish. He lived in an apartment just a few hundred meters from the parish compound, and helped out on Sundays in Tudor and other parishes.

The religious education program for primary school teachers was called READ, and was started by two Sisters, Sr. Margaret Gem and Sr. Clare. The two Sisters were full-time in this program, whereas the priests were part-time. Beginning in 1981, Smidlein and Fr. Ed Schoellmann, who was pastor of Kilifi Parish, collaborated with the Sisters in facilitating the seminars. In 1982 they were joined by Fr. John Conway, who later made the following remarks:

The READ Program was a series of nine seminars, given on weekends, for teachers teaching the Christian Religious Education (CRE) program in primary schools. They would come in on a Friday evening and stay till after lunch on Sunday. My specialties were on spirituality and on scripture, Smidlein's on Church history, and Schoellmann's on family life. This program continued on for the whole three years I was in Mombasa, and even afterwards. Schoellmann went to the U.S. in 1983, but Smidlein continued to assist up till 1987.

I enjoyed this program very much. It was very well organized and the Sisters had a good relation with the three of us priests. Having a close relationship with the teachers over the various weekends, and seeing their interest, gave me much enthusiasm for religious education at the conclusion of each seminar. The program was non-denominational, but for Christians only. There was no Islamic counterpart.

Conway lived in an apartment in the middle-class estate of Bombolulu, about four or five kilometers north of the Nyali Bridge – but still well within the city limits of Mombasa. This apartment was rented by Maryknoll since Conway was also the Overseas Training Program (OTP) coordinator for Maryknoll in Mombasa Diocese. From 1982 to 1985, one or two OTP students stayed with him in Bombolulu. In the early 1980s this area was at the far edge of the developed expansion of the city and still had relatively light traffic. Such is not the case today.

Conway also taught at Shanzu Teachers College, which prepares secondary school graduates to be teachers. He was already beyond the age to work for the government, and so was limited to teaching only a few hours a day, without salary. The college has a full time program in religious education and Conway appreciated the opportunity to teach there.

This was because of my background as a teacher and my interest in theological education. As a missionary, I saw this as having a ripple effect, where I had contact with a lot of people who had a lot of questions, and who wanted input on how to relate faith with people's lived experience.

Conway also taught at Shimo la Tewa (Swahili for 'Eel's cave') High School, a provincial high school for boys. He taught Christian Religious Education for Forms Three, Four and Six.

In 1985 there was a change of Headmasters and the new one emphasized the examination part of CRE. So, I switched to teaching Form One. I was initially reluctant to do this, but talked it over with my Spiritual Director, Holy Ghost Father Ed Rynne, who recommended I take the opportunity given. It turned out to be a very good experience for me. Being non-examinable for Form One, I had freedom to stray from the syllabus when I thought it beneficial for the students. Later, though, the syllabus became more formally established, but I never taught it.

While in Mombasa, Conway also became involved with Charismatic Renewal. It had been started by Sr. Margaret Gem, with whom Conway worked in the READ program. Conway commented:

At first, I thought the Sisters were overly involved, but over a three-year period we enabled the lay people to take their full stature in Charismatic Renewal. This was my most enriching experience on the Coast. We had a regular program of training people to lead the prayer meeting and also to give the instructions.

When I left, a Goan woman replaced me and the program continued to improve over the years. Maryknoll Fathers Bill Madden and Joe Corso also came down to Mombasa from Nairobi to assist with the Life and the Spirit seminars.

Although charismatic prayer obviously co-relates with the African sense of emotive prayer and religious experience, it has been met with suspicion by leaders of the Catholic Church in Kenya. Conway spoke about this:

Enthusiastic renewal throughout Church history has always been difficult, because it's hard to manage and the Spirit is not easy to control. Another concern of the Kenya hierarchy is that there's a significant drift of people from their own Catholic Church into Pentecostal churches. They're concerned that involvement in Charismatic Renewal may diminish people's attachment to the Church and sacraments. But in fact this has proven to be the contrary; when done well, people get more attached to the Church. Thirdly, the Catholic Church has very rational liturgies, whereas Charismatic Renewal emphasizes spontaneous praise, thanksgiving, petition and reflection in the Spirit, which is not highly rational.

People who are under stress and strain seek a faith context where they can articulate some of their anxieties. Of course, some talk about strange things such as visions and dreams, which at times have to be corrected. But usually expressing their emotional needs in a faith and prayer context relieves the pressure people are feeling. I think Charismatic Renewal provides for this.

In 1988, Cardinal Otunga in Nairobi sent a letter to all parishes expressing his favor in Charismatic Renewal. He also sent two pamphlets in English about it, which were translated into Swahili. This institutionalized this form of prayer for the church in Nairobi, and for the country, as Conway explains:

It took the Church 500 years to get to the Council of Chalcedon, where they discussed the psychic make-up of the Lord Jesus. But knowing Jesus' psychic make-up doesn't necessarily do anything for one. It's only after one experiences the benefits of being in the presence of Jesus that God comes alive. One experience is healing. When one experiences God's action in one's life, then they become more interested in doctrinal formulations about Jesus. So, I think Charismatic Renewal has the right starting point, and of course it is based in the Catholic community.

Another ministry of Conway in Mombasa was with the Diocesan Family Planning department, teaching the Billings Method. Kenya at that time had four percent population growth, the highest in the world, and all families were feeling pressure to reduce their number of children, particularly in urban areas.

This was a very good experience for me because it was adult centered. However, the Catholic Bishops were paranoid about the word contraception, which constrained us in offering solutions to couples. The Bishops' singleness of approach, i.e. natural family planning only, made it difficult for us to teach about

other practices which are acceptable in large parts of the Catholic world, such as the temporary tying of fallopian tubes. Because of my background in moral theology I have a wider perspective than they, but they are not about to change their opinion.

We offered eight sessions on the method, but the turnout was always small, maybe only ten people, and only two men. But it was a beginning. When I left Mombasa I was able to get funding to train personnel for this program. They later got a Sister full-time in charge of the program, plus forty or more trained instructors in the diocese.

Conway often helped out in Kongowea Parish on Sundays, and got to know Fr. Martin Kivuva, the pastor, well. As has been mentioned above, Kivuva, who is now the Bishop of Machakos Diocese, has had a very good relation with Maryknoll, beginning with the relations established in Mombasa in the early 1980s. Conway also developed very good relations with the Holy Ghost Fathers there, in part due to his close connection to Ireland, where both his parents were born. At the end of 1985, he left Mombasa to return to teaching at the Apostles of Jesus Seminary in Nairobi, and in October, 1986, he became the Regional Superior of Kenya.

Garissa Diocese, Bura Parish

In the 1970s the World Bank and other International Funding Institutions (IFIs) were awash in petrodollars resulting from OPEC's decision in 1973/74 to limit production of and raise the price of petroleum. The World Bank in the mid- to late-1970s searched the world looking for places to lend money in order to promote economic development, in accordance with World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic models. Large projects, whether agricultural or industrial, were preferred, utilizing chemical inputs, infrastructural improvements, modern management practices and more intensive use of energy sources. The Tana River, Kenya's largest river, offered itself as a perfect place, in northeastern Kenya, in which to invest in such development. The land was flat, very suitable for irrigation, and the Tana has a good flow of water throughout the year. The dry climate and high heat were ideal for cotton production, which could enable Kenya to be self-reliant in cotton for its flourishing textile industries (at that time), and to export surplus cotton. In the 1950s a small irrigation scheme had been started in Hola, on the banks of the river thirty miles south of Bura, using prisoners detained by the British colonial government for alleged membership in Mau Mau. When released, the former prisoners, almost all of the Kikuyu tribe, remained living in Hola, as they had land and water. This scheme's success ostensibly proved that a much larger irrigation scheme, up to 150,000 acres running along both sides of the Tana River from Bura to Hola, could both improve Kenya's economic output and provide land and employment to its rapidly growing population. Another large irrigation scheme on the Tana River, Mwea, eighty to ninety miles north of Nairobi, was being competently run by the National Irrigation Board (NIB), which was viewed as the proper managerial board for the envisioned Bura Irrigation Scheme.

Bura itself was a tiny, hot, dusty village on the eastern side of the river. This place lent its name to the scheme, which was in fact all on the western side of the river, six to fifteen miles away. On the eastern bank of the river was the desert, populated by Somali

people. This area is so arid that hardly any people live there although nomadic Somali traders, using camels, occasionally emerge from the desert. The western side of the river has a riparian forest extending about five miles inland, populated by two Bantu ethnic groups, the Malakote and Pokomo, who are related to the Mijikenda peoples of the coast. They are primarily agriculturalists, planting on the banks of the river after the seasonal flooding. They also raise small numbers of cattle and other domestic animals for milk and meat. The Malakote are almost one hundred percent Muslim, whereas the Pokomo are a mixture; those who live further north are Muslim and those further south near the mouth of the river are mainly Christian, either Catholic or Protestant. The forest is also home to wild animals, including lions, leopards, monkeys, baboons, zebra, giraffe, antelopes and others, but few if any buffalo or elephants. The other indigenous ethnic group in the Bura area is the Orma, a nomadic pastoralist people who roam around the whole area from Garissa to the edge of the forested land near the mouth of the river. The Orma are related to the Oromo of Ethiopia and to the Somali, and like the Somali are one hundred percent Muslim. In the nineteenth century the Orma ruthlessly held sway over the Tana River region, but by the end of the twentieth century they were a people under tremendous stress – from drought, from imposition of modern government control of the nation, and from lack of education and modern health services.

The World Bank and other lending agencies lent Kenya \$100 million, and in 1978 construction was begun (the Kenya government also invested about \$20 to \$30 million). Canals were dug, irrigation piping was put in, housing was built for tenant farmers in outlying villages and for employees of the NIB in the town, and essential infrastructure such as roads, a water treatment plant, and schools were added. The National Youth Service (NYS) put up a large camp on the western edge of town, and several hundred NYS members helped with the construction work. Most of the NYS in Bura were skilled, middle-aged men. Two huge pumps were installed at the river twenty miles upstream. These pumped water into reservoirs from which gravity-flow took the water to the scheme. The pumps were seen as temporary, since the government of Kuwait had promised to put in an enormous earthen dam, called a barrage, which would eliminate the need for pumping water from the river and ensure permanent and inexpensive irrigation water. Kuwait's renegeing on this promise, and lack of a barrage even in 2010, has been the scheme's most crucial impediment – but not the only one.

In late 1979 the first tenant farmers were resettled from their upcountry homes to Bura, and by 1982 ten villages had been occupied. Each village had about 200 mud-walled, dirt-floored, tin-roofed houses, each with four rooms that were large by rural Africa standards. Each house was supposed to be occupied by a complete family, two parents and three or four children, since ample labor was needed to harvest cotton. Although they were tenant farmers, the houses belonged to the head of the household, including the tin sheets on the roof, all of which could be inherited by children. Even after the scheme collapsed in 1990 and many people migrated away from Bura, most families kept their legal hold on the house and farming tenancy by having someone return to Bura each year for some months.

Each family had use of three irrigated acres in the block farms for cotton production for half of the year, and one and a half acres for maize production (Katumani seed maize) for the other half. In addition, each family was allocated another quarter acre near the village for growing vegetables, fruit or whatever they wished. If anything,

families took even greater care of these vegetable gardens than the cotton, although they worked very hard in all gardens. Families were needed since it was estimated that three adults were needed to do all the work of planting, weeding, providing water from the canals, and harvesting the cotton and maize. Three adults were numbered as the two parents and two children old enough to do farm work. The NIB management was responsible for plowing, supplying sufficient water, and informing farmers when water was coming to their particular blocks. The scheme also did aerial spraying of the budding cotton – with Malathion, one of the most toxic pesticides in existence and which had been directly implicated in huge increases in cancer in other irrigation projects throughout the world.

Two hundred families, each with three acres, meant that there were six hundred acres per village, a total of 6,000 acres in the whole scheme. The town and managerial infrastructure were intended to oversee up to 150,000 acres on both sides of the river, with tens of thousands of re-settled people living in hundreds of villages. But without an earthen barrage, the pumps could provide water for not more than ten villages. With two thousand people living in the town, to service only ten villages, the scheme became hopelessly top-heavy. In the U.S., a mere 6,000 acres would translate to just three to six average-sized family farms. Despite this, in the scheme's good years of 1983 to 1987, each family harvested an average 3000 kilograms of cotton per year and earned an annual net income of \$1,200 to \$1,500, well above average for rural Kenyans. A Catholic man, living in Village Five, remarked in December, 1985, "We have now gotten used to Bura, to its heat, its malaria, its remoteness and dust storms, and feel that we can live here permanently. It's become our home now." Within a few years he would think otherwise.

Indicative of Kenya's tribal politics, the overwhelming majority of re-settled families in the first seven villages were Kikuyu. Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first President and a Kikuyu, had died in August, 1978, and was succeeded by Daniel Arap Moi, a Kalenjin (of the small Tugen tribe). However, in the first few years of his presidency Moi did not feel secure enough to challenge the Kikuyu aristocracy who had dominated Kenya's politics for the first fifteen years. Kenyatta had ensured that his tribe would be the prime beneficiaries of resettlement of Kenyans all over the country in the years after Independence. Another place on the Coast which had almost exclusive Kikuyu settlement was the Lake Kenyatta scheme near Lamu, called Mpekatoni. This has always been greatly resented by the indigenous peoples of the Coast. And, as was discussed in Part One, the large migration of Kikuyu to former colonial farms in north Rift Valley Province has led to tension and brutal conflict with Kalenjin, who claim that as their traditional land. The final three villages of Bura had a more balanced ethnic mix, including many from the four local ethnic groups, but also Kamba, Luo, Luhya, Kisii, Taita and other tribes. The villages were called by their numbers, Village One through Ten. Later the government tried to re-name the villages with African names chosen by the village residents, but the numbers always stuck. In most cases, two villages were paired together, each with one primary school, an office, and a large storeroom. Village Eight was off by itself and had its own school. Village Ten was close to the town, and its children went to the school in town.

The first disaster to strike Bura was malaria – a tragic episode in the scheme's early settlement that foreshadowed the eventual demise of the scheme itself. The Kikuyu, plus some from other highland tribes, were mainly from non-malaria zones and did not

have resistance to malaria. Bura – perhaps because of its proximity to the river – has prodigious numbers of the anopheles mosquito and all strains of malaria, including the usually fatal cerebral malaria. In the first three years fully one thousand newcomers, almost all strong, middle-aged adults, died of malaria, (out of a total population of ten to twelve thousand). The Maryknoll priests, who did not arrive till late 1984, were told that in 1981 there was a month when whole villages were overcome with malaria. “You couldn’t be helped,” people said, “because everyone else was just as sick as you.” No precautions were taken to prevent them from contracting malaria, such as use of a prophylactic or bed nets. The Kenyan Health Department responded that cost-benefit analysis was done prior to settlement, and it was concluded that the cost of prevention was not economically justified. Loss of lives was seen as a predictable but extraneous part of re-settlement (an externality in economic jargon) that would not impair cotton and maize production. This is according to Sr./Dr. Lucy Yu, a Maryknoll Sister and medical doctor, who worked in Bura for a number of years, and who made inquiries about this in 1983. By the mid-1980s almost all residents in Bura, including church personnel, had either died or built up sufficient resistance to malaria that in most cases it ceased to be fatal, although people continued to get sick – and any new-comers were always going to be in mortal danger.

The Catholic Church established a presence in Bura from the beginning, first by obtaining a large plot on the edge of the commercial town, called Huruma (a Swahili word meaning mercy), and building a large, circular church. The first priests in Bura were from the Capuchin Religious Order, who had been given charge of the Diocese of Garissa in 1973. Garissa itself, which is the provincial capital of Northeastern Province and a small city, plus two oases in far northeastern Kenya, Wajir and Mandera, populated mostly by Somali, were originally ministered to by Consolata priests from Meru Diocese. The southeastern part of the Diocese, along the Tana River and up to Lamu on the coast, was served by Holy Ghost priests from Mombasa. Prior to 1970 there were very few parishes, and very few Catholics. Almost all Catholics were government or military personnel and a few business people.

One exception was Wema Parish, where the whole village was made up of Pokomo Catholics. Wema is located near the small town of Garsen, which is at the junction of roads heading to Malindi, Hola and Lamu. In 1984, when Maryknoll was surveying a place to take a mission in Garissa Diocese, it was first offered Wema Parish. Fr. Frank Breen stayed there for four days and commented that he felt he had gone back into the Africa of myth and legend.

It was a small village on the banks of the Tana River, where the Pokomo farmed mixed crops, raised domestic animals and fished in the river. They had to continually ward off pesky wild animals, such as baboons, zebra and antelope, which would steal their crops as harvest approached. Lions were frequent visitors, which the pastor told me one night only after I had taken a half-hour stroll in the dark after supper. I asked the villagers the next day about lions. They said they liked it when lions came, because they scared away all the other pesky animals from their farm fields.

We did not take this parish for two reasons: the only Catholics were the 200 or so villagers in Wema, making it a very small parish, and the parish had

started a rice irrigation project which was not being run well and had to be separated from parish management. I did not want to be the axe-man who would come in and immediately shut down a parish project.

In 1980 or 1981 a Maltese Capuchin priest was made pastor of Bura and remained there for four years. He was a good builder, and built the church, a rectory, a house for Sisters from India next to the rectory and their small dispensary. In the next two years, in addition to the Indian Sisters, two other Sisters' Congregations took assignments to Bura: the Maryknoll Sisters who eventually lived in two villages (Six and Eight), and the Little Sisters of St. Francis, a local congregation headquartered in Nakuru at that time, who settled in Village Two. These villages were from five to six miles from the town, quick rides when dry, and impassable when rain was heavy. Fortunately, Bura is dry about 300 days a year. All the Sisters made health care a priority, although they also did various forms of pastoral work and social outreach to the villagers. An elderly British man came in 1983 and began construction of a church in Village Two, next to the Sisters' house. In the other villages, unused houses were used for Mass, according to the monthly schedule, and for other church gatherings. Some Sisters thought that mission in Bura would be akin to a desert experience, along the lines of the Brothers of Charles de Foucauld. Admittedly Bura was extremely hot, dry and remote, but within the huge scheme's territory the parish was more like a semi-urban area, with eleven or twelve heavily populated neighborhoods. As the Catholics were all upcountry people, from densely populated parts of Kenya, ministry had to take on forms more suitable to working with a relatively large number of people from many ethnic groups. In 1985, when all villages were settled, Bura Parish, with seven churches and 1500 church-going Catholics, was possibly the largest parish in Garissa Diocese. Swahili was the language, not only for the church, but for everything in Bura. Bura's youth, no matter their tribe of origin, spoke Swahili fluently as though their mother tongue.

In 1983, Fr. Joe Glynn became Kenya Regional Superior, taking over from Bill Madden. He had recently left Juba, Sudan, but was strongly convinced that Maryknoll should be in remote areas where the church was institutionally undeveloped or where primary evangelization was required. Since the Maryknoll Sisters had just recently gone to Bura, and Garissa was about to become a new diocese in 1984, he made inquiries about a possible Maryknoll mission there. In November, 1983, Fr. Frank Breen returned to Kenya from Mission Promotion in the U.S., and went to study Swahili, first in Mombasa for two months and then in Musoma, Tanzania, for the first four months of 1984. At that time, the Maryknoll mission in Zambia was concluding, and Fr. Jim Kuhn was to be available in late 1984, after also going for a refresher in Swahili. The Capuchin priest who had started the parish in Bura had returned to Malta, with no indication of when or if he would return to Kenya. In 1984, an elderly Capuchin, who had no mission experience and spoke no Swahili, was stationed in Bura. He merely said Sunday Mass (a catechist preached) and daily Mass for the Sisters. Clearly a decision had to be made about Bura.

Breen made two trips to Bura, one at the beginning of January, 1984, prior to his going to Tanzania.

At that time, I had not expected to be assigned to Bura, but heard that Maryknoll Sisters were there. I was in Mombasa, beginning study of Swahili, and had just bought a new pickup truck, not with four-wheel drive unfortunately. It was dry and I decided to take a three-day trip up to Bura, a six-hour drive from Mombasa. I remember my first entrance to Garsen, the first little town in the desert. I felt I had entered a different planet, totally unlike my experience in the western highlands of Kenya. Later, when I had lived in Bura for several years, I looked on Garsen as a civilized town with all the amenities of modern life. Life in a remote desert changes one's perceptions. In Bura, I received a good welcome from the priest and stayed two days with the Sisters.

After he completed language school he took another trip to Garissa Diocese in June, 1984, but this time it was with the Vicar General of the Diocese, who took him to six far-flung parishes in three days – Mpekatoni, Wema, Hola, Bura, Garissa and Wajir.

That was my only visit to Wajir, 300 kilometers northeast of Garissa, and probably the only time I will ever go there. It is a pleasant oasis in the middle of the desert, with a moderate sized town. There is a large Kenya military base on the outskirts of the town, and most of the Catholics at Sunday Mass were soldiers. Wajir Parish runs a large home and school for girls, who are all Somali. This enables them to get schooling, primary and secondary. Although they are all Muslim, the Somalis in Wajir are very friendly. While traveling from Garissa to Wajir, we came across the most desolate place I have ever seen in my life, called Habaswein. It's on a river that is dry most of the year, but there is some water permanently under the ground, making it livable. One Catholic man, assigned there to the Agricultural Office, ran up to our vehicle when our convoy briefly stopped. I felt sorry for him, as he was from the lush highlands of western Kenya. Fortunately, when I left Wajir I was able to get a flight on a small plane of an NGO back to Nairobi. Otherwise, it could have taken me days to get back, by bus. The Vicar General hinted Maryknoll could take Wajir Parish if we wanted, but I informed the Region that I was not interested in going to Wajir.

Shortly after that, Bishop Darmanin requested Breen to visit Wema Parish with hopes that Maryknoll would accept this parish. The priest who started Bura Parish had returned to Kenya and expressed his hope of returning to Bura as pastor. At this time, Joe Glynn suffered a stroke and Fr. Tom Burke took over as temporary Superior. Glynn firmly believed that the new Bishop had decided to give Bura to Maryknoll, but Breen had talked with various Capuchin priests, including the older priest in Bura, and none knew anything about Maryknoll coming to Bura. In August, three priests took the brand new Land Rover that Joe Glynn had bought for the mission to Bura on a circuitous trip, to Mombasa and Kilifi, then to Wema, Bura and Garissa. These priests were Burke, Breen and Jim Kuhn, who had just come from Zambia. On the road to Garissa, they decided to tell Bishop Darmanin that Maryknoll was not accepting Wema Parish, and since Bura was not available Maryknoll would not at this time be coming to Garissa Diocese. Breen believed he would be going to Mombasa Diocese, most likely to Kilifi but also possibly Tudor. When they arrived in Garissa and met the Bishop, the first thing he said was that it

was all settled and that Bura Parish was being given to Maryknoll. The three Maryknoll visitors were startled, but grateful. Bishop Darmanin said that he just needed time to smooth things over with his own Capuchin confreres, and that there was no problem. The former pastor had agreed to go to another parish, to Mpekatoni. Between June and August, 1984, Joe Glynn had given the Diocese of Garissa a gift of \$50,000 for building a church. No one knows whether this swayed the Bishop's mind on giving Bura to Maryknoll.

While living in Tudor Parish in Mombasa from May to July of 1984, Breen had been going almost weekly to Nairobi with his pickup to collect surplus furniture at Maryknoll's center house, and taking it to Fr. John Conway's house in Bombolulu outside of Mombasa. This furniture was intended for the rectory in Bura and it was a relief to know that Maryknoll would take over Bura. In mid-August Breen remained in Nairobi and on August 26th flew to Garissa on the same plane as Cardinal Otunga and the Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya for the installation of Bishop Paul Darmanin as the first Bishop of Garissa Diocese. He then went to Mombasa, and on September 1st he embarked to Bura with a full load of beds and other furniture.

September and October of 1984 were dry months, and he made several more trips to Mombasa to collect more furniture, until he had completely furnished the rectory. On one trip he took a bus to Mombasa, to collect the Land Rover that he had left there. The short rains were not too heavy that year, lasting only the month of November, making the trips to Mombasa not too problematic. His other task was in getting around to all the villages, meeting the people, getting to know the catechists and setting up a Mass schedule. In mid-December Jim Kuhn came from language school, and at that time a new schedule was implemented in which each of the five village churches would receive Sunday Mass twice a month, the distant church at the Nanigi NYS camp forty kilometers from Bura (near the pumping stations and reservoir) would have Mass once a month, and Mass would be celebrated at the large church in the town every Sunday at 8:15 AM. Whoever said the Mass in town usually had one other Mass in a village. Kuhn was given the Land Rover, and the two priests shared all vehicle maintenance and fuel expenses from their transport budget. The rough roads and long distances made upkeep of these vehicles very expensive.

Breen worked out a schedule in which he would be at the parish in morning hours, for office work and to meet any parishioners who came in to the town.

In the morning, people were working in the fields, from very early because of the heat. There wasn't much we could do pastorally at that time. But often someone would come to the town for their own business, and drop by the parish. I would welcome them into the rectory and we would talk over a cup of tea. Hospitality to parishioners was something I learned from Jim Roy in Tudor. In the afternoon it was very hot and people were resting at home. That was when I could go around to villages, either delivering announcements or visiting people at their homes. At night is when I could do pastoral work. It varied, such as having discussions in a village church, or visiting a small Christian community, or sometimes having a weekday Mass or Reconciliation Service in a village. I asked the people when I first arrived what the best time for meeting with them was and

they responded unequivocally that it was in the evening, when it was a little cooler. People did not go to bed in Bura till 10:00 PM, because it was so hot.

One set of lessons that Breen devised was based on an article he read in the U.S. in 1983, listing fourteen activities that are needed for a parish to be a true parish.

These were organized around three aspects of Jesus' ministry, that of priest, king and prophet. A parish should have worship, governance and a prophetic role. For instance, in worship there are five or six short declarative sentences, such as: a parish should celebrate Mass each Sunday; people should participate in the liturgy; sacraments of initiation should be done in stages, etc. The same would be true for governance, for instance that a parish should have a parish council, it should have training for laity in self-reliance, it should have a good catechetical program, etc. For prophetic role, there were fewer sentences, such as awareness of and activity on behalf of matters of justice, education of the people about social justice, and two-way communication between the parish and the wider church.

I remember when Bishop Darmanin visited me one day and I showed him this list. He was not too keen on the roles of the laity and especially on two-way communication. I guess he thought there should be only one-way communication from the Bishop to the laity.

The people in the village churches appreciated these topics very much. Each month I would choose one sentence, go around to each church and to the town's SCCs, and we would discuss all the aspects connected with this particular sentence. By raising the awareness of as many people as possible of a comprehensive understanding of what a parish is, I thought this would aid immensely in our task of creating self-reliance.

In fact, the village churches did become very, very self-reliant, maybe not in terms of finance, but certainly in terms of liturgy, catechetics, community, leadership and the creation of a sense of ownership of their church.

Kuhn set up a schedule of going to a different house of Sisters every morning to say Mass, so that each group of Sisters would have Mass once a week in their own house. In Village Two, that Mass would usually be held at the church and many of the parishioners of Villages One and Two would attend. There were also special times when Mass was celebrated for all the Sisters and priests together, to promote staff unity.

One of the African Sisters was in charge of the Catechists so the priests did not meet with them. Breen felt that this was a missed opportunity, since he had various topics that he wished to teach and discuss with them. But Breen and Kuhn did set up a schedule of Stages of Baptism and always held adult and schoolchildren baptisms at Easter or Holy Week. First communions were also done at the same time. All who were receiving these sacraments had to undergo a full year's catechesis.

Breen also tried several initiatives in getting youth more involved in the parish. The village choirs were mainly primary school children, with a few older youth involved, whereas the choir in the town was mainly adults. Since in Kisii choir competitions had been immensely popular, Breen tried one in Bura. The first one was moderately

successful, but it seemed that the village choirs did not have the same interest in competitions as he had experienced in Kisii. A more successful initiative was in making slide shows. The youth were asked in each church to create a drama, which Breen would film with his camera. The drama usually needed 100 or more slides, and eventually Breen added dialogue by taping the youth actors after they had seen the finished slide show. These shows were then taken around to all the villages, to provide some entertainment in the villages at night. Breen also brought up some movies from Nairobi, usually from the French Consulate, to show in the villages – and in the town. To do this, he bought not only a sixteen millimeter film projector but a 1500 kilowatt portable generator, as there was no electricity in the villages.

For the first six months or so they had to put up with darkness in the rectory at night, alleviated only with gas pressure lamps. These were not sufficient to read by, but at least helped during supper time. They budgeted for putting up solar panels and lights that run off batteries, which was done in the early months of 1985. Having lights in the house, in all rooms, helped tremendously. The refrigerator and stove were fueled by propane gas, and the priests had to go to Mombasa to get refills. They bought two extra-large cylinders for the refrigerator, and three regular size for the stove. The cylinders could last over three months, ensuring they would not run out during the rainy seasons. Special trips had to be taken to Mombasa in March and October each year, just before the onset of the long and short rains, to refill the gas cylinders and get other supplies.

In 1985, both priests became aware of the drought situation in eastern and northeastern Kenya – and in eastern Africa as a whole – and its dire effects on the local Orma people. They had planted trees around the rectory and had hired a local Orma woman to water them every day. Her husband had a bad leg, making it impossible for him to engage in the tribe's nomadic way of life. Many Orma had moved into the town of Bura, trying to eke out a living selling goat's milk or firewood. Kuhn began trying to get to know the Orma, and discussing with them how they could get back to their nomadic pastoral livelihood. He used to give out small amounts of money to help people start small business, but this assistance never proved effective. However, he did get to know many Orma. One night, some Orma came to the rectory saying a boy had been bitten by a cobra and he needed to be taken to the hospital in Hola. It had rained and the road could have been impassable, but Kuhn set off late at night with the boy and his family. They did make it to Hola, but too late, as the boy succumbed to the poison. This effort, though, did enhance Kuhn's reputation with the Orma as someone who cared.

Because of the drought, Breen sought assistance from the Kenya Region for food aid, and received \$5,000.00, equal to Shs. 80,000/-.

I gave this money to a local woman who did trading. She went to her home in Kamba country and bought a truckload of beans. I was nervous about this, and the truck did have a mishap, falling over on the journey to Bura. But they finally arrived with the beans.

I then set up a series of visits to the villages, to distribute a tin of beans to each family. Distributing food is not easy and I had to hire some people, including our night watchman who was very helpful. We did distribute the beans without too much of a problem, but by the final villages we had only a half or quarter tin to give to each family. This was a huge effort, for a very small amount of food per

family. I realized that food distribution needs a lot of money and a large, competent organization. I never tried this again. In any event, beginning in October, 1985, the rains were better for the next few years.

Another program that Breen organized that was very successful was the spraying of every house in Bura in December, 1985, right after the rainy season, and again in June, 1986. He bought a number of tins of a powerful insecticide from the Welcome Pharmaceutical Company in Nairobi. The mixture of this insecticide (name forgotten) was one part for twenty parts water, and twelve tins were enough for the whole scheme. In Bura, the Health Department provided people and spraying machines for the work. Breen bought face masks for the workers plus boxes of UHT milk that they could drink each day after spraying. He also took them out to the villages each day, and picked them up after their work was done. They were paid salaries for this work.

I was nervous about this program also, because this was a very potent insecticide. Sr. Rosemary Millazzo (a Maryknoll Sister living in Village Eight) told me that older women sometimes grab a handful of dirt from the walls of their houses to eat. I guess they like the iron that is in the dirt. Those were the walls that we were spraying and we were afraid that we might poison someone.

We were very fortunate. No one became sick during the spraying exercise, maybe because we did a lot of advance education about this program. For months afterwards people from every village told me how great that program was. There were no mosquitoes in the villages that whole year. They could sleep in peace. We sprayed houses not only in the villages but in the NIB residential areas as well.

I went on furlough for the last three months of 1986, so we did not have a spraying program then. But it seemed that it was no longer as necessary.

In 1986 two others stayed for some months at Bura. One was Brother Loren Beaudry, who was doing his Overseas Training Program (OTP). He stayed from January to June, 1986, and then moved to Kilifi.

I was struggling to learn Swahili so could not do much work. I did some things with youth, but spent most of my time in language practice. I also bought a motorcycle, which enabled me to get around to the villages.

He made some good friends in Bura, particularly a family in which three sons were afflicted with muscular dystrophy. He bought the older of them a strong wheelchair and a short-wave radio that he could listen to while sitting idly every day. There was no cure and sadly all three sons succumbed to the progressive disease in their early twenties. The family, however, never forgot Brother Loren.

Another man came from Japan, Takashi Motanagu, who was intending to join a diocesan seminary, with the wish to eventually be Japan's first Catholic missionary. His long-term goal was to work in Somalia. He spent his time in Bura learning Swahili and doing religious education work with schoolchildren. When he left Bura he went to Mogadishu, Somalia, for some months. At that time, Mogadishu was peaceful and there

was a small Catholic presence in the city. He was eventually ordained and did become a missionary to Africa, but to Ethiopia rather than Somalia.

While Beaudry was in Bura, he and the priests began discussing the toll that cotton and maize take on the soil, namely the rapid extraction of nitrogen from the soil, and whether the fertilizers added each year were sufficient. Beaudry was from a town in rural Minnesota, had some knowledge of good farming practices, and commented:

I don't think this is a good idea, to be planting both cotton and maize every year on the same soil, since both take a lot out of the soil. Compounding this, they are not planting any other crops, such as beans that can counteract the negative effects. I don't know whether the soil will hold up long-term.

At this same time, an agronomist, an American woman, dropped by the parish rectory one day. She had been in Bura for a month or more, doing research and tests on soil fertility. She gave the priests a thirty-page report, which documented a loss of twenty-five percent of soil fertility in Bura in the first five years since the project's inception. She said that these desert soils are fragile and not very deep, and that rapid soil fertility loss has been a critical problem in irrigation projects in other arid parts of the world. Constant intensive farming of cotton would eventually lead to collapse of the soil, according to her report.

This was one more warning sign raising serious questions about the wisdom of constructing large agricultural projects in an equatorial desert. Another issue that had arisen by 1986 was the ever-increasing depletion of trees in the area, due to the need for firewood. The two thousand tenant-farmer families used only firewood for cooking, as was true for most of the residents in the town. A few may have had kerosene stoves, but kerosene was difficult to come by. Hardly anyone had electricity. Only those with money, including the priests and Sisters, could afford to use propane gas. The priests also had bought a charcoal stove, built with Appropriate Technology designs, which produced high heat all day using very little charcoal. This they used for boiling huge pots of water, cooking beans, and other such purposes.

The lack of firewood had actually created jobs and a good source of income for some farmers and their adult sons. They purchased donkeys and donkey carts, set off every morning into the bush up to even twenty kilometers away, and brought back full loads of firewood every afternoon. However, the scheme management and the government Agricultural Department recognized that this was not sustainable. In 1986 or 1987 they introduced the Mathenge tree from the western outback of Australia. This is a thorn tree, with inch-long thorns that contain a semi-poisonous thick fluid that can leave a painful wound. It grows very well in dry places and is very good for firewood. This tree solved the firewood problem. However, the tree then became the problem, growing wild in all villages, and overwhelming the canals where the tree received lots of water. A few years later when the cotton scheme collapsed, farmers could earn money by clearing the canals of twenty-foot high Mathenge trees that had roots at least ten feet deep. The priests had to have two spare tires on their pickup trucks. On trips to villages, at least one flat tire was guaranteed and they hoped they would not have more than two in one day. Breen said:

The chairman of our parish council was a welder, who also knew how to change and fix punctures. He got a lot of work from us – probably two to four repairs a week during dry months, when flat tires were more common. But we learned where we could pass in the villages and did not drive very far into the villages. These precautions reduced the number of flat tires.

The Mathenge tree has been introduced into other parts of Kenya, with similar positive and negative results. Aware that alien species can always have deleterious repercussions, the Kenyan government is trying to impart information to large gatherings in those areas where the tree is growing wild, to motivate people to see it as a potential income earner. Not only is it very good for firewood, charcoal and even timber, but its pods are nutritious and can be used for human or animal food. A relatively high income can be earned from charcoal from Mathenge, if someone is willing to work hard. This is the only tree in Kenya currently permitted for charcoal production, and could benefit people living in semi-arid areas. However, this would require quite a change to their culture, as they tend to be pastoral nomads. People are also very wary of the toxicity of the thorns.

In Bura, the block farms have been disused since the end of cotton production, and probably have many Mathenge trees growing wild. These will all have to be completely cleared, including their roots, before the scheme can be resurrected – if ever a guaranteed source of water is built.

In 1987, Fr. Tom Pesaresi came to Bura for several months. He did some very good work, especially meeting with couples who wished to get married, doing what is called pre-cana counseling with them, and arranging very joyous wedding celebrations. But after a few months he felt there was not enough work to do in Bura for three priests – he was right about that – and left for Nairobi. In 1986 there were eleven Sisters, two priests, a Brother and a seminarian in Bura, for only 1500 Catholics. Breen surmised, “Ours may be the most overstaffed parish in Africa.”

In 1985, Breen noticed that the old Englishman building the church in Village Two was taking an inordinately long time and decided it was necessary to budget for building churches in other villages.

I budgeted for building two churches, in Villages Three and Seven, with a very simple design that I discussed with the people of these churches. I was very fortunate in finding a man who was trustworthy and a good builder. He was a farmer from Village Seven who appreciated the work and the extra income he would get. In 1986, after the money was disbursed to us, I bought the building materials in Mombasa, contracted with local Arab traders in Bura to bring the materials from Mombasa, and then we began construction. I never had any problem dealing with the Arab traders. I also enjoyed talking with them and they liked talking about various facets of their Islamic faith.

In a very short time we completed building the two churches. The church in Village Two had also finally been completed, but when the Englishman saw how quickly I had put up two churches he seemed to lose heart and he returned to England. I never knew how he had happened to arrive in Bura, how he survived,

and what his motivation was for living like a hermit and doing this slow construction. Sometimes on Sundays he would come in to our rectory, where he could take a shower, put on clean clothes and have a good meal. We always gave him a good welcome. But I never understood the purpose of his being in Bura.

Before he left, he had begun work on a large church in Village Six, which I had to complete in 1988. In Village Eight, the money that Joe Glynn had donated to the Diocese was used to build a church there. The churches I built were smaller than these other three churches, but more than adequate. The churches I built were also much cooler, since I designed large, open windows, with thick iron bars in each window that would prevent theft.

In late 1986, Jim Kuhn visited some agencies in Nairobi with regard to a plan to help Orma restock goats and resume their traditional pastoral livelihoods. One agency, which was assisted by U.S.A.I.D., allocated over \$40,000.00 for this project. The money was granted to Kuhn in January, 1987. Kuhn was never interviewed concerning his work in Kenya, so Breen explained how the program was implemented:

Jim really wanted just a small amount of money to help a few people whom he knew. This large amount of money made it very difficult for him, since he was not able to identify so many people needing help, nor find out where to import goats from. In theory, there were 100 groups of ten Orma each, and each group was supposed to be given thirty-five goats. The disbursement of this money took place in one month, but it became impossible to track down the purported members of the groups or what happened to the goats.

Just as Breen had discovered earlier in trying to distribute food, programs like this need much greater capacity and organization. Orma also tended not to be trustworthy when requesting financial assistance from Catholic priests.

Breen also started a development project in 1987, assisting ten farmers, one from each village, to each raise fifty egg-laying hybrid chickens. He provided building materials, although the farmers and their families had to build the chicken houses. People from the Agricultural Department showed great interest in this project, and gave the farmers a great deal of information and advice. When the farmers were ready, Breen went to Ken-Chic in Mombasa and bought five hundred one-day-old chicks. He planned the purchase well in advance to make sure the seven-hour trip from Mombasa to Bura occurred during the dry season, so that there would be no problem on the roads. He asked the Arab traders to bring sacks of chicken feed every month, which Breen paid for. He commented:

The project went well for the first seven months, as long as I was buying and supplying the feed. The Agricultural men also went around giving every chicken inoculations. After seven months the farmers were starting to get eggs every day and it became their responsibility to save money to buy feed every month.

This is where the project fell into difficulties, as they were not able to save money. The Arab traders waited for them to come in and buy the feed, which they

didn't do, or else asked for credit. Arab traders do not give African farmers credit. There was a good market in Bura for selling eggs, but weak managerial capacity caused the project to fail. However, some of them continued to raise some chickens in the chicken houses, using local cornmeal. They were able to get a certain amount of eggs and earn a little income. I learned that you can't start a project like this unless you have one or two people available full-time to run the project for five years or so. Only then can you expect the farmers to become self-reliant.

Breen also tried to help older youth in villages to raise hybrid rabbits, as a source of meat for their diets. He took a group of ten, mainly boys aged fifteen to twenty, but two girls also, to Wema Parish where an American Sister was raising rabbits. She gave instructions and a demonstration of correct rabbit husbandry practices to the group for several hours. Breen then started bringing up hybrid rabbits from Nairobi, and giving them to those who went on the trip. Because of the irrigation water there were many green plants growing around the villages, ensuring enough food for the rabbits. According to Breen this effort also had very mixed results.

The youth were supposed to build rabbit hutches, but few did. Some did produce a large number of rabbits, keeping them in spare rooms, but the rabbits eventually died due to bad husbandry. One boy did fairly well and brought in two rabbits to sell to us each month. The youth thought that this project would be a way to earn money, rather than viewing it as a way to supplement the family diet. Diverse assumptions about goals make project viability difficult.

Breen was kept busy that year with other building projects. The Sisters' Dispensary at the mission compound was expanded to become a small maternity ward, as many women, especially Orma, were coming to the Sisters for delivery. With his good foreman and his team, this construction was done very efficiently, in accordance to the Sisters' wishes. Breen also had them finish a building on the edge of the compound, with the intention of opening a youth polytechnic. With money he received from family in the U.S., Breen also added a screened-in porch to the front of the rectory so they could sit outside at night to catch a cooling breeze, without being eaten alive by mosquitoes. The open courtyard in the center of the rectory was also roofed over, making the rectory much cooler. The open courtyard was a Maltese design, appropriate for the island of Malta, for catching rain water which downpipes took to a large cistern under the floor of the courtyard. One of the first things the priests did in 1985 was to connect the rectory, Sisters' house and dispensary to the town water supply. The courtyard cistern became superfluous.

In the villages, Maryknoll Sisters Dr. Lucy Yu, in Village Six, and Liz Gormley, in Village Eight, and one of the Little Sisters of St. Francis, in Village Two, were running small clinics and dispensaries. Yu became famous for being able to treat infertility in married couples. Infertility is considered a curse in African beliefs, and often leads to divorce or the husband taking a second wife. Middle-aged women who are barren feel deeply ashamed and are never accorded status and respect in African culture. That so

many treated by Yu became pregnant and had healthy children was perceived as a sign of God's blessings on the whole health enterprise of the Sisters. Other Sisters, Eileen Manning in Village Six and Rosemary Millazzo in Village Eight, ran nursery schools, did social outreach in their local villages and regularly met with the Catholics regarding catechetical, liturgical and other community actions. Two of the St. Francis Sisters in Villages One and Two (these two villages were distant from the other nearest villages, and from the town, making them somewhat isolated) performed similar ministries.

Around 1986 or 1987, both Sisters Yu and Gormley returned to the U.S., and the African Sister who was a nurse also left Village Two. This left huge lacunae in Catholic healthcare in the villages, on which so many depended. There was a large health center in Bura town – as large as a hospital, but run by Clinical Health Officers rather than Medical Doctors – and the Indian Sisters' dispensary at the mission. The Sisters' village clinics had well-trained staffs, and the remaining Sisters could oversee the clinics, but lack of Registered nurses and a medical doctor limited their services. There were good relations between these village clinics and the government Health Center, but the latter did not provide any mobile outreach to the villages.

Eileen Manning also left for the U.S., and three new Sisters came to Village Six: Pat Cain, Becky Macauey and Anastasia Lott. In Village Eight, Liz Gormley was replaced by Sr. Cathy Barbee. In Village Two, three new Sisters of St. Francis came to replace the original ones who had arrived in 1983, and fortunately one of new Sisters was a registered nurse.

To replace the Sisters who had been doing medical work in the villages, the priests requested a Maryknoll Lay Missioner with medical qualifications, and in 1988 Marge Humphrey, a Physicians Assistant – equivalent to a clinical health officer in Kenya – arrived in Bura. She took up residence in Village Six, and served the clinics in both that village and Village Eight. She also gave occasional assistance to the clinic in Village Two.

The Sisters in Village Six instituted a new program, called DELTA, in the villages, using the churches and small Christian communities. This is a program that creates conscientization, or awareness-raising, through a series of life examples or selected stories that are called codes. People hear the examples or stories and discuss the causes, ramifications, and solutions to the particular situation or issue raised by the code. One of the Little Sisters of St. Francis had been in charge of the catechists and when she left, the Maryknoll Sisters began close work with the catechists. At times day-long or weekend seminars were held at the church in the town for thirty to fifty people from all the churches, facilitated by the priests and Sisters working together. Funding came from Maryknoll for these seminars. The DELTA program originated in Kenya at the Diocese of Kitui, where a pastoral institute was teaching it. Several lay people from Bura were sent to Kitui to take this months-long course.

In September, 1987, Breen opened the youth polytechnic. There were three classrooms, semi-open, an office and a storeroom. A board was chosen, and their main job was to interview and choose three teachers. The subjects were carpentry, masonry and home economics. For the first two courses the students were primary school graduates, young men in their mid to late teens. Breen expected primary school girl graduates to take the home economics course, but it turned out that about ten married

women from the town took the course. The courses went well, and the teachers tried hard to impart their knowledge. Two of them had difficulty with student-teacher relations, since the students were older than they had expected, although the content of their teaching was good. In 1988 Breen was returning to the U.S. to work for the Maryknoll Magazine and it was not certain the polytechnic would continue. The Education Department of the government took interest, and eventually they moved the Polytechnic to another part of the town. It continued performing a service, although Breen does not know for how many years it stayed in operation.

Breen had been in Bura just a little over three years when in early 1988 he received a surprise letter from the General Council in New York asking him to accept an assignment to the Maryknoll Magazine. He liked Bura and had many friends there, but after reflection he accepted this assignment. "I had written some articles for the Magazine, which apparently they liked. Fr. Ron Saucci had just become Director of Social Communications, and he wanted more Maryknoll priests – one from each area of the Maryknoll world, Asia, Africa and Latin America – working full-time on the Magazine's editorial staff. I was to be the one from Africa." His departure date was the end of July, 1988, so as to start at the Magazine in September.

Several years after he had left Bura, Breen said that one of the most important things he did was to introduce the people to the teachings of the church on Social Justice and their basis in scripture. Parishioners expressed appreciation for these teachings, as they had never heard this aspect of church teaching before.

One example I used as a paradigm was the situation in South Africa and the Church document in 1986 called the *Kairos* Document. This document said that there are situations in which believers must take a stand. They can not be neutral. And they may be confronting others who call themselves Christian and who use their interpretation of scripture and theology to justify discrimination and violence. I preached and taught that Christians must understand what discipleship means and what Jesus taught – about social justice, about inclusion, about non-violence – and incorporate these practices in current church practice.

Conversely, he felt he made a mistake in trying to introduce too many changes of Vatican II to the people, who were not ready for this.

Someone once explained to me that the residents of Bura were all immigrants. They wanted to hold on to something from their places of origin and one of the big things was religion. They didn't want changes, but rather the religious practices they were used to in their home places. Most of them were from places run by the Consolata Fathers, who work in Kikuyu country, and it was their religiosity that the Bura people knew. So, that was a downside to my ministry there.

But I made many friends in Bura. I assisted about thirty students in secondary school over the years I was there and afterwards, and I remain in communication with many of them. When I come to Kenya, I visit with those living in Nairobi, Central Province or Mombasa. It is very interesting to see how they have developed, now that they are middle-aged with their own children.

I had one last thing to wrap up, regarding a group I had started that was collecting money to hopefully open a power mill in the outlying villages. They had collected only about \$150.00, far too little to start. An untrustworthy man had become chairman of the group and I feared he would steal the money. Shortly before I left for the United States, I called a meeting of the whole group, about thirty people only, along with the Social Services Director from Bura. He, too, thought the group had no purpose. I wanted them to vote to disband the group, so I could return the money. Unfortunately, they voted to continue, preventing me from doing anything. I put all the money in the bank in Hola and gave the financial statements and books to an old woman who was the treasurer. Then I left. I suspect the money was eventually embezzled.

The Kenya Region had over half a year to find a replacement for Breen. There was no Maryknoller available in 1988, but John Conway, the Kenya Regional Superior, approached the Apostles of Jesus, where he previously taught and had very good relations. They assigned one priest, Fr. Silvanus Aranaitwe, who later became Superior of the Apostles of Jesus, and a seminarian to Bura that September. Breen sold his four-wheel drive pickup to the Region, which gave it to Aranaitwe for his use in Bura. This was a one-year assignment only, since in 1989 Maryknoll Associate Fr. Tom McQuaid came to be with Kuhn. In October, 1989, Breen also returned again, to live at Bura while full-time correspondent for the Magazine. This turned out to be a bad choice, since Bura was too remote. Breen needed to make trips for the Magazine to many different places in East Africa and to other parts of Africa. After two very difficult trips back to Bura during heavy rains, in order to be there for Christmas and for Easter, he requested to be transferred to Nairobi.

The heavy rainfall of November/December, 1989, deserves being noted. It was the only time in Bura's history that farmers were able to reap bountiful harvests of maize and other crops solely from rainfall, probably due to an El Nino event in the Pacific Ocean which often causes increased rain in East Africa. By that year delivery of irrigation water had become erratic, making the heavy rains a welcome blessing.

As the changes in church personnel were taking place, the first forebodings of trouble in the scheme were occurring. The pumps at the Tana River were breaking down more often, including during peak growing and harvesting months for the cotton. Farmers' net incomes were going down. In 1989, the first of the two major calamities took place: the Ministry of Agriculture, which had taken over management of the scheme from the NIB, chose a different firm to supply the pesticide which kills the boll weevil. This is the insect which is the most serious threat to cotton, able to wipe out every acre planted. This pesticide did not work, and most of the cotton was ruined. Farmers claimed that the Minister of Agriculture had a large economic interest in this firm, but it was impossible to prove that corruption played any role in this debacle. This pesticide was administered manually rather than by airplane, and did not use Malathion but another less toxic chemical.

This was followed in 1990 by the final nail in the coffin, and a huge nail at that: the complete breakdown of the two pumps, which were intended to last only about five

years. From that year to the end of 2009 only a trickle of water flowed to the Bura scheme from the Tana River, mainly just enough to provide drinking water for the town. The Bura Irrigation Scheme collapsed.

Compounding these two calamities, the insecurity situation was becoming untenable. There had always been a menace from Somali bandits, called Shifta, mainly along the highways, and occasionally in commercial centers. Buses and lorries all traveled in armed convoys. In 1992, directly co-relating to the chaos in Somalia itself, Shifta banditry increased dramatically.

There had been further changes among the Maryknoll Sisters: Sr. Nancy Lyons had replaced Cathy Barbee and Associate Maryknoll Sister Katie Sickler, a St. Joseph Sister from Albany, NY, had replaced Pat Cain. The Sisters living in Bura in 1992 to 1993 came into direct contact with the violence over the course of three separate incidents, which left some badly traumatized. Two were on the highway from Bura to Garissa, which was a paved road by then. In the first, they were stopped on the road, but nothing serious happened. Not many weeks later, they were stopped again, forced to come out of their vehicle, and were apparently on the verge of being physically attacked. A bus suddenly came down the road, and the Shifta bandits left the Sisters alone. They returned to Bura safely, but Katie Sickler was so traumatized a plane had to be hired to air-lift her out of Bura. Sometime later, Shifta bandits attacked Village Six at night. The Sisters heard shots and darkened their house, but then everything became quiet. After an hour or so, Marge Humphrey decided to look out the window to see what was happening. A shot rang out, blasting into the window sill just inches from her face. Several years later Humphrey was still unconsciously suffering from PTSD, and had to be taken off a flight in the United States when uncontrolled terror suddenly made her hysterical.

In 1990 the Indian Sisters decided to withdraw from Bura. The nurse was returning to India, and the other two Sisters were needed in other places in Kenya where their congregation was opening new convents. The Maryknoll Sisters withdrew in 1993, primarily due to the insecurity, which had become terrible that year. Rosemary Millazzo, who had been among the first Maryknoll Sisters to arrive in early 1983, was the last one to leave Bura in 1993. She had stayed in Bura longer than any other of the church personnel. In 1992 or 1993, the Little Sisters of St. Francis also withdrew, also due to the insecurity. Their congregation was also expanding in Kenya, and there were places where their Sisters could go.

Kuhn and McQuaid continued together from 1989 to the end of 1991, when Maryknoll handed over responsibility for Bura to the Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota. A group from Bismarck had arrived at language school in Musoma in January, 1991, and went up to Bura in September that year. This group consisted of one priest, a married couple, of whom the wife was a nurse and the husband a deacon, and a single woman lay missionary. Even though they were still just learning Swahili, these missionaries and the Bismarck Diocese were pleased to have their own mission in Africa. The diocese hoped to send out other missionaries, including at least one more priest, in the future. In 1991, although the scheme had basically collapsed and farmers' incomes had plummeted, Bura was still a peaceful, pleasant parish. The horrific insecurity situation had not yet begun.

Kuhn was assigned by the Kenya Region to Kilifi Parish, to replace Fr. Jim Roy, who wanted to go to Marafa. The Region also felt that Kuhn, who had been ordained forty years and was approaching the age of seventy, needed to be in a more urban situation. He was neglecting his personal needs, affecting his health, compounded by Bura's remoteness and rugged conditions. He had started a cooperative honey marketing group with the Catholic catechists of Bura, in which the catechists bought honey from Pokomo bee-keepers living near the river and brought the honey to the mission. Kuhn had contacted a small company in Karen, Nairobi, which refined and sold bottled honey. This company agreed to buy the honey, which is considered the best natural honey in Kenya. Kuhn had agreed to transport the honey to Nairobi in his pickup truck, accompanied by one or two catechists. He was taking several round-trips every month, traversing the pot-holed, rutted road between Garissa and Nairobi carrying heavy loads. One day, while headed towards Nairobi, he was at the final section before the pavement began when he lost control of the pickup, which flipped over the side of the road. The pickup was totally ruined and all the honey was lost. Kuhn reported that the steering wheel column had snapped, but it is also possible that he had fallen asleep at the wheel, as road conditions are not so bad in that section. This incident spurred the Region to the decision to re-assign him out of Bura.

Kuhn stayed in Kilifi for a couple of years, but then went to the U.S. for medical reasons. A shadow had been found in his lungs, and it was diagnosed as the beginning of lung cancer. He had not been a smoker, and a reason for this cancer was not determined. It went into remission for some years, and Kuhn was able to go to Dar es Salaam for a year or two, but he finally had to return to the U.S. permanently. He died in August, 2007.

In the early 1990s, two Maryknoll Lay Missioners, both men this time, were assigned to Bura, Mark Huntington and Marty Roers. Huntington was a registered nurse, and took up the mantle of providing good medical services in the villages. He and Roers lived at the mission in the town at first, but then moved out to a village when the Sisters left. When Huntington left Bura, he joined the Maryknoll Brothers, and currently serves in Mwanza, Tanzania. Roers joined the Maryknoll seminary for a year or two, but then decided he did not have a priestly vocation. He remains very close to Maryknoll, however.

In an unfortunate turn of events, the Diocese of Bismarck concluded its mission to Bura at the end of 1992. The priest and woman lay missionary left Kenya and returned to the U.S., and the married couple went to assist Gekano Girls Secondary School in Kisii Diocese.

That left Tom McQuaid as the only priest in Bura. He had already moved out to Village Three, living in the mud-walled house vacated by one of the farmer families. He improved the house somewhat, but decided to live very simply in solidarity with the tenant farmers. He had no electricity or running water, using canal water which he purified. He was very affected by a new type of mission theology being articulated then, called Theology of Presence.

In 1993 the security situation had become very tense, and would continue so throughout the 1990s. The cotton scheme had collapsed, and people were earning no incomes. They could not even grow food for themselves, with so little water coming in from the river. Many villagers deserted Bura, returning to their home areas or to the cities

looking for jobs. In other cases, one or two members of the family remained in Bura, trying to survive as best they could, while the rest of the family went elsewhere. Children, who by then had completed schooling and found jobs, sent money back to their parents in Bura. In the 1980s, most of those who finished primary school were able to go to secondary school, so good were the incomes. Fees at secondary schools were only about \$200 to \$250 per student. After the scheme collapsed, very few were able to go to secondary school, unless assisted by extended family or someone like a priest. AIDS had also become prevalent in Bura and elsewhere in Tana River, and some died of this scourge in the 1990s. Many young people so despaired of life that they decided to get married while still in their teens. They feared they were going to die young, so they might as well try to enjoy adult prerogatives in the short time remaining. They at least were able to get houses to live in, so many were available. And those who remained in Bura could do some day labor jobs, such as removing the Mathenge thorn trees or rehabilitating the canals. The government set up a food assistance program, distributing small amounts of basic food rations every month. This program did not suffer from corruption, for the most part. The parish also at times provided some food relief, donated by Catholic Relief Services. McQuaid sincerely believed that by living as closely to the predicament of the people as possible, it would be a sign of the church's fidelity to them, giving them hope that matters might change. Fortunately, he himself never experienced an attack by the Shifta. The bandits did not try to rob villagers in Bura, because the people did not have any money. They targeted buses and large retail and wholesale enterprises.

McQuaid also made vocation recruitment for the priesthood one of his primary goals. He sent a number of boys from Bura to seminaries in various parts of Kenya, such as Kwale in Mombasa, and Ruaraka in Nairobi. When he left Bura at the end of 1993, he arranged for several young men from Bura to go to the college and major seminaries in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Several were eventually ordained. One is a priest of the Chicago Archdiocese, but often visits the Maryknoll Sisters, since some of them lived in his village, and he also goes back to visit Kenya and Bura almost every year.

When McQuaid left, the church in Bura entered a dramatically new era. Just seven years earlier Breen had considered it the most over-staffed parish in Africa. On January 1, 1994, there were no priests or Sisters in Bura Parish, although two Maryknoll Lay Missioners, Mark Huntington and Marty Roers, who had arrived in 1993, stayed there until 1996. The priest from Hola served it as an outstation for the time being. Finally, Bishop Darmanin was able to persuade the Holy Ghost Fathers to accept responsibility for Bura. For most of the 1990s one or two of their priests were stationed in Bura. They had their misfortunes: one of them was robbed and beaten by Shifta; another had a terrible road accident. The Holy Ghost Fathers eventually were not able to provide anyone for Bura, and the parish reverted to being without a priest at times. Various priests have come and gone, and in 2010 there was one priest stationed there. The security situation has improved, but is always a latent threat. The road to Nairobi is all paved, making it a more pleasant seven-hour trip. Much of the road to Mombasa is also paved.

The cotton scheme was never revived and for almost twenty years little if any farming took place in Bura. An important meeting was held in Bura at the end of 2009, headed by leading government ministers. They announced that a steady amount of water

from the Tana River was about to be supplied by new pumps bought by the government and that farming would soon begin anew. It would not be cotton, but the farmers could at least access enough water to grow a variety of crops, for sale and for their own food. There are many people living all over Kenya who were former tenant-farmers in Bura and still have a legal claim to a house and land, but none initially returned on the basis of this promise; the former tenant farmers have heard too many unfulfilled promises. However, this time the promise was brought to fruition. In March, 2010, water began being pumped through the canals to all the villages, enabling farmers to produce a bountiful harvest of whatever crops they decided to plant on the acre and a half allocated to each farmer. Some former tenant farmers did return, but the main beneficiaries are those who persevered all the years to the present. As 2011 dawns, Bura is again holding out hope of being a place where Kenyans can live peacefully, with food and a little income.