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What is This?

Now It Is Your Turn: East Africans Go in Mission

JOSEPH G. HEALEY

This study presents a wide variety of data and examples on East African (Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan) Catholic missionaries going to other places in their own country, to other countries in Africa, and to other continents. The increasing number of African priests, Brothers, Sisters, and laypeople being sent throughout the world is striking and has important ramifications for the future shape of global Catholicism and global Christianity. The letters (including personal testimonies) from Kenyan missionaries around the world are a source of narrative missiology. Like the famous mission diaries of old, these letters portray both the personal struggles and the searching of the African missionaries themselves and the methods of their missionary evangelization.

The Swahili poster used to celebrate World Mission Sunday on October 21, 2001, in Tanzania dramatized a challenging metaphor for contemporary mission. The Mission Commission of the Tanzania Catholic Bishops Conference produced the poster. The artist was Stella Dativa Rutechura. The theme (translated from Swahili) was, "Every baptized person is a missionary.¹ Take the Good News of Salvation to your neighbor," followed by Mark 16:15: "Go into all the world. . . ."² The small drawings (connected by arrows running counterclockwise around the borders of the poster) portrayed various places and situations of missionary activity: the Family, Small Christian Community (hereafter SCC), Outstation, Parish, Diocese (with a map of Tanzania highlighting the 30 Catholic dioceses in Tanzania), and World (with a map highlighting the six continents).

Acts 1:8 narrates Jesus' powerful words to the first apostles: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." During the past two thousand years, Christian missionaries have carried out this mandate everywhere. Now in the first years of this third millennium, we are seeing dramatic changes in who the missionaries are. Today more and more missionaries in the Catholic, conciliar Protestant, evangelical, and Pentecostal churches are coming from

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Third-World countries.³ The “mission field” has changed dramatically (Walls 2002; Jenkins 2002; Shorter 2002).

This was echoed in Pope John Paul II’s stirring words to the people of Tanzania during his visit to Moshi Diocese, Tanzania, on September 5, 1990: “Now it is your turn to be witnesses of Christ in Moshi Diocese, in Tanzania, on the continent of Africa, and to the ends of the earth” (1990a:70).⁴ These words can be addressed to the people of each of the 53 African countries.⁵ So now it is the turn of African priests, members of religious orders, and laypeople to be missionaries. Jesus says at the end of Mark’s Gospel, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” Now African missionaries are going into the whole world to proclaim the good news of salvation.

The initiatives boldly undertaken by the young Churches of Africa in order to bring the Gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) are certainly worthy of note. The missionary institutes founded in Africa have grown in number and have begun to supply missionaries not only for the countries of the continent but also for other areas of the world. A slowly increasing number of African diocesan priests are beginning to make themselves available, for limited periods, as *Fidei Donum* priests in other needy dioceses—in their own countries or abroad. The African provinces of religious institutes of pontifical right, both of men and of women, have also recorded a growth in membership. In this way the Church offers her ministry to the peoples of Africa; but she also accepts involvement in the “exchange of gifts” with other Particular Churches, which make up the People of God. All this manifests, in a tangible way, the maturity that the Church in Africa has attained. (John Paul II 1995:No. 38)

This includes participating in “an ever-greater missionary commitment *ad gentes* [to the nations]” (John Paul II 2000a:No. 5).

While there has been a numerical explosion of many kinds of Christian missionaries coming from the Third World, the research, analysis, and missiological reflection in this study focus on the African Catholic missionaries in and from East Africa, comprising the countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (Healey 2000; Healey 2001).

New Meaning of the Word “Missionary”

First we have to move beyond the stereotypes and traditional terminology. For many years in the Catholic Church in Africa, the word “missionary” usually referred to an ordained (priest) or vowed (Brother) white man from Europe or North America. Sometimes white Sisters were included. Now there is a new meaning of the word “missionary” (Mbonde 2000). We have to distinguish between the following:

1. Expatriate missionary (person who comes from outside the host country). This person is not only the traditional white European or North American, but can come from India, the Philippines, Latin America, or another country in Africa.
2. African missionary (person born in an African country).⁶ In this context a Tanzanian-born missionary priest (for example, belonging to the Spiritans, Missionaries of Africa, or the Apostles of Jesus) who works in Zambia, South Africa, or Nigeria can be called both an expatriate missionary and an African missionary. Just as Catholic missionaries can be all colors and nationalities, so they can have different vocational charisms: priest, Brother, Sister, layman, and laywoman. In terms of geography, an African person can truly be a missionary living and working in another part of an African diocese, an African country, the African continent, and/or the whole world.

The dramatic development in contemporary missiology is that mission is from everywhere to everywhere. Truly the whole church is missionary. Now mission is more situational than geographical, with many new frontiers (Shenk 1999; Dorr 2000; Shorter 2002). A significant development in world mission has shifted the Christian church's center of gravity from the West, from Europe and North America, toward the East and South, toward the continents of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America (Shenk 1999:184). Philip Jenkins clearly demonstrates this southward shift of the center of gravity in global Christianity. "The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes, and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning" (2002:3). Andrew Walls has written extensively on the growth of non-Western Christianity (Walls 2002).

Now all the local churches throughout the world are in mission. So we can speak of the missionary responsibility of the local churches in Africa and their involvement in *ad gentes* mission. This is highlighted in the sections "Open to Mission" (No. 128–130) and "Organic Pastoral Solidarity" (No. 131–135) in *Ecclesia in Africa* (John Paul II 1995). Now the local churches in Africa (and other parts of the Third World) are *both* Mission-Sending Churches and Mission-Receiving Churches, as emphasized by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (in the United States) in their pastoral statement *To the Ends of the Earth* (1986:No. 15). Now African missionaries are called forth by their local churches and sent to other parts of the world. Thus the old distinction between "Western mission-sending churches" and "mission lands receiving churches" no longer applies. There is now mutuality in mission, a mutual sharing, a mutual giving and receiving, as emphasized in *Redemptoris Missio* (John Paul II 1990b:Nos. 26–27, 63–64, 85). Local churches throughout the world are in mutual dialogue with each other. Christians are part of both sending and receiving churches. Thus African people are both evangelized and evangelizers.

The last ten years have seen an increasing number of East Africans joining international congregations, such as the Spiritans (formerly Holy Ghost Missionaries) and the Jesuits and international missionary institutes, such as the Missionaries of Africa (formally the White Fathers), the Apostolic Life Community of Priests in the Work of the Holy Spirit, and the Consolata Missionaries (John Paul II 1995:No. 37). The East African Province of the Spiritans was founded in 1973 (Nnamunga and Onyalla 1998). In March 2003 it had 94 priests, originally coming from Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. They are now working in 16 countries on the continent of Africa and five countries in Europe and North America. As an example, Kenyan Spiritans are presently working in Madagascar, Mauritania, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The Kenyan Catholic bishops have stated that encouraging local vocations to international missionary societies is a Kenyan church response to world mission (Healey and Sybertz 1996:351–352).

The Religious Missionary Congregation of the Apostles of Jesus—the first African religious missionary institute—was founded in Uganda in 1968 to proclaim the gospel to those who are not Christians and to conduct pastoral work in needy mission areas. Its growth has been phenomenal. In March 2003 the congregation had 336 perpetually professed members (including 311 priests, 15 deacons, and 10 Brothers), 20 temporary professed, and hundreds more in major and minor seminaries. Seven houses of training (novitiates, minor and major seminaries) are located in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Presently the Apostles of Jesus are working in 40 dioceses in 10 countries (the three countries already mentioned together with Djibouti, England,

Ethiopia, Italy, South Africa, Sudan, and the United States of America). The Congregation of the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary, the women's counterpart of the Apostles of Jesus, was founded in 1976 (Healey and Sybertz 1996:352).

Theologically, an expatriate missionary or an African missionary working in a particular diocese in Africa is part of the local church in that area. After the Holy Spirit, the local church has the main responsibility for the mission of the church. The religious of Missionary Congregations, members of Missionary Societies of the Apostolic Life, Fidei Donum priests, and other missionary groups assist and support the local church in this task.

East African Missionaries Going to Other Places in Their Own Country

During his historic visit to Kampala, Uganda, in 1969, Pope Paul VI hailed the coming of age and the maturity of the church in Africa with the now-famous words: "By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves" (Paul VI 1969:575). In fact, for most Africans mission means being evangelizers in their own countries and cultures. There has been significant growth of "home missionaries" in the three East African countries or "African missionaries reaching Africans." There are over 82 Kenyan members of religious missionary institutes (priests, Brothers, and Sisters) working in Kenya itself (Mondo and Bozza 1999).

The Catholic Lay Missionaries (CLM) of Kenya started in 1989. The African saying "We are called. We are sent" appears in Swahili on the cover of booklets produced by this group, with a map of Kenya and different arrows reaching throughout the country and outside to other countries. Presently this lay missionary society has 28 members (16 men and 12 women) working in Marsabit and Lodwar Dioceses and Nairobi Archdiocese in Kenya. Ukweli Video has produced a video on CLM called *The Extra Mile* (PAL, 35 minutes, 2000). It portrays how these Kenyan lay missionaries are of particular service to people who live on the margins of society, are most vulnerable, and are generally forgotten or ignored. This reinforces the mission idea that "to be called is to be sent" (Healey and Sybertz 1996:340–346) and the importance of African laity in mission (Healey and Sybertz 1996:352–354). This recalls the *Lineamenta* of the 1987 World Synod of Bishops on "Laity," which restated:

The [Vatican II] decree *Ad Gentes* [1965] underlines the importance and indeed the irreplaceability of the laity in the missionary activity of the church: "The church is not truly established and does not fully live, nor is [it] a perfect sign of Christ unless there is a genuine laity existing and working alongside the hierarchy." (1985:No. 21)

The Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa, with headquarters in Musoma, Tanzania, is a missionary-related congregation that works in various dioceses in Tanzania. One of their Final Vows Ceremonies took place in Musoma on December 8, 1999. At the Offertory Procession, each of the three sisters brought up a special gift symbolizing her lifetime commitment and explained it to the cathedral congregation:

1. Cross: following Jesus Christ.
2. Seedling: rootedness and growth in the Christian life.
3. Drum: announcing the good news.

A recent trend is a new type of African *Fidei Donum* priest, that is, diocesan priests from one Catholic diocese who are sent to another diocese in the country. In 2003, for example, there are Catholic priests from Same and Mbeya Dioceses in Tanzania working in Zanzibar Diocese, which has few locally born priests.

There are many ways in which ordinary African people can be missionaries in their own countries and in their own local situations. One concrete way is to consciously promote missionary parishes (Shorter 2002) that include the following elements: primary evangelization including the stages (steps and rites) of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (hereafter RCIA); interreligious dialogue (very real in a place like Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where I live with a population that is 70 percent Muslim); initial steps of inculturation, which are a special missionary task (where the final and permanent steps are the responsibility of the local church); instilling a missionary spirit into liturgical celebrations (for example, on Good Friday, rather than praying the Stations of the Cross in the church itself, participants set up outdoor “stations” that wind through the local neighborhood); SCCs that are a “new path of mission” (Shorter 2002); special missionary groups in the parish such as Teams of Evangelization for adults and youth and the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood for children; evangelizing outreach programs of different apostolic groups; and special missionary events such as the processions of the Jubilee Cross that took place in 2000. Here is one description of the missionary enthusiasm of children in Tanzania:

The annual celebration of the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood took place in Dar es Salaam Archdiocese, Tanzania, on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs (28 December 2002). Over 1,100 children of the Holy Childhood from 40 parishes participated. Dressed in their colorful yellow and white “papal” uniforms, they joyfully sang and danced. Cardinal Polycarp Pengo was the Main Celebrant at the Eucharistic Liturgy. For many the most moving moment was when a 14-year-old Tanzanian blind girl named Irene Gerardi from St. Joseph’s Cathedral Parish did the First Reading in Braille. As one person said: “A blind girl taught us the meaning of mission.” (Healey 2003:186)

There are many creative ways to celebrate and inculturate missionary feasts such as the Epiphany, Pentecost, and World Mission Sunday (next to last Sunday of October) on the local level in East Africa. One way is to pray the “Our Father” together in different languages, especially in one’s first or heart language, which might be an Eastern African language, such as Swahili, Kikuyu, Luo, Ganda, Chewa, or Bemba, or in an international language, such as English or French. This recalls the first Pentecost Sunday described in the Acts of the Apostles 2:1–13 and shows the universality of our church. Different African languages can be also used for the Prayers of the Faithful during the Eucharistic Celebration, a “Sunday Service without a Priest,” the weekly Bible Service of an SCC, or other prayer services. Also, the congregation can use different African (and world) languages in exchanging a sign of peace.

One way to symbolize our missionary solidarity with people around the world is to substitute the word “food” for “bread” in saying the “Our Father.” Many African languages do not have a word for bread, which is still unknown to many African people whose staple food is cornmeal or unsweetened bananas or yams. Even in many

countries in Asia, the staple food is rice. Thus in many languages the translation of Matthew 6:11 is "Give us this day our daily food." This global solidarity also reminds us of the millions of people around the world who only have one meal a day and others who are presently experiencing famine, such as in African countries that regularly have severe drought, most recently Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

One special way of promoting mission locally is through the missionary outreach of SCCs. Already back in 1979 the AMECEA (Association of Member Episcopal [Catholic] Conferences in Eastern Africa)⁷ Study Conference described the missionary role of Eastern African SCCs in these words: "SCCs are an effective way of developing the mission dimension of the church at the most local level, and of making people feel that they are really part of the church's evangelizing work" (1979:2). Now thousands of SCCs in Eastern Africa emphasize practical outreach to lax Catholics or those searching for God as well as accompaniment and service to people with HIV/AIDS, refugees, street children, the sick, and other needy people. This is highlighted in two documents: "Ecclesial Base Communities as a Force for Evangelization," in *Redemptoris Missio* (John Paul II 1990b:No. 51); and "Living (or Vital) Christian Communities," in *Ecclesia in Africa* (John Paul II 1995:No. 89).

In some parishes in Tanzania, adults interested in becoming Catholics (called "Inquirers") first pass through the SCC in their geographical area/neighborhood, which submits the request forms for the baptism of adults to the parish office. Some SCCs have started the ministry of *Accompanier* in the Adult Catechumenate. A catechumen chooses an SCC member to "accompany" him or her through the stages (steps and rites) of RCIA. The catechumen is invited to participate in all the activities of the SCC. Personal relationships and friendships are an important part of helping people who are preparing for baptism to feel "at home" in their local Christian community. Growth in faith is an experience of living in a believing community. The emphasis is on the faith being "caught" in sharing the life of the SCC rather than just being "taught" in formal instruction classes. Sometimes the whole SCC accompanies "its" catechumens—another example of community ministry and group evangelization. Here all the SCC members are responsible for the spiritual and pastoral life of their own small community. This approach is closely related to the African values of community, joint responsibility, togetherness, and sharing.

In Tanzania the Mission Commission of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Tanzania, and the Mission Awareness Committee (hereafter MAC)⁸ of the Religious Superiors' Association of Tanzania (RSAT) collaborate to promote mission awareness on the local level through outreach programs, seminars, workshops, meetings, publications, electronic media, and special celebrations. Some highlights of mission activity, mission awareness, and mission reflection during the Jubilee Year 2000 especially related to Tanzania included the following:

1. Four children of the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood from Msolwa and Morogoro Parishes in Morogoro Diocese represented Tanzania at the "Jubilee of Children" at the Vatican on January 2, 2000. One young girl presented a dove to Pope John Paul II in the outdoor ceremony.
2. The First Sunday of Lent, March 12, 2000, was the "Jubilee of Catechumens." This was part of the RCIA.

3. The month of October 2000 was "Missionary Month." It began on October 1 with the feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, who is the Patroness of Mission. The basic fact of St. Thérèse's short life and yet very wide influence is remarkable in itself. It is mind-boggling that the official Catholic Church would choose a 24-year-old cloistered contemplative nun who lived and died in her convent to be the co-patroness of missionary activity, along with the active world traveler St. Francis Xavier. This is both significant and prophetic. It challenges all of us to the importance of prayer and hidden sacrifices to put flesh onto the oft-quoted statement of *Ad Gentes* that "the whole church is missionary by its very nature" (Second Vatican Council 1965:Nos. 2 and 39; Paul VI 1975:No. 59). Many SCCs have chosen St. Thérèse as their Patroness Saint and try to imitate her missionary spirit.

4. The canonization of St. Josephine Bakhita, the first modern African woman saint, took place in Rome on October 1, 2000. For those who remember their church history, the last African woman saint was St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine. Josephine was born in Western Sudan in 1869. She was kidnapped and enslaved at the age of six or seven by Arab traders, and her captors gave her the name "Bakhita," which means "fortunate." She was bought and sold five times before going to Italy and eventually gaining her freedom. Bakhita became a Canossian Sister and humbly served in the congregation as a cook, seamstress, and doorkeeper. Over the years she gained a reputation for sanctity. When she died on February 8, 1947, for several days a long line of mourners filed past her coffin for a final good-bye. Sudan's persecuted Christian minority identifies with Bakhita's simple and profound faith. A Sudanese bishop states:

For all of us, Bakhita is a symbol of suffering and hope. People who even today experience the drama of slavery, incursions, bombings, and want, identify with Bakhita, the girl who was enslaved and deported from El Obeid; very many fugitives, close to four million, relive the drama of enforced exile from their land. However, they also recognize the great strength of spirit, tenacity to overcome difficulties, and humility in placing oneself at the service of others. They find protection and help in Bakhita. (Healey 2001:139)

The Canossian Sisters promote St. Josephine Bakhita as a saint of social justice and of girls' and women's rights, especially on the continent of Africa.

Various ceremonies have taken place in Tanzania, such as the special celebration at St. Josephine Bakhita Church in the Mtoni Area of Dar es Salaam on October 1, 2000. Another celebration took place in Dar es Salaam Archdiocese on October 28, 2000, with a Eucharistic Liturgy celebrated by Cardinal Polycarp Pengo and a musical play on Bakhita performed at Loyola High School.

5. Over 1,200 delegates from 132 countries, with 41 African countries represented, participated in the World Mission Congress that took place in the Mariapolis Center in Castel Gandolfo outside of Rome from October 18–22, 2000. The official Tanzania delegation was nine people led by Father Alfons Ndekimo, then the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Tanzania. Some Tanzanian priests and Sisters studying in Rome also participated. During the meeting one of the national delegations met daily for evening prayer and reflected on the question: "Where did you see the face of God today?" Here are some of the author's personal experiences that are special moments to remember, especially from an African perspective.

One moment was the whole assembly standing to joyfully and enthusiastically clap, sway, and sing the official song of the congress: "Jesus Is the Source of Life." Everyone waved the brightly colored congress scarves that included the flags of all

the countries and the words “Jubilee of the Mission” printed in eight languages, including Swahili: “Jubilei ya Kimisionari.” Here was a powerful witness of the unity of the inculturated world church.

Another moment was the Missionary Jubilee Eucharistic Celebration in English at the *Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls*. The Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions) were in different languages. Mrs. Helena Khamsini, a lay delegate from Tanzania, had the paper, with the fifth and last intention printed in English. But when she heard the Chinese and Indian women speak in their own languages, Helena was filled with a missionary spirit and spontaneously translated her intercession into Swahili.

Throughout the congress delegates sung, danced, drummed, and performed their experience of mission. An impressive feature was the personal testimonies in the inculturated “Voices from the Continents” sessions.

6. The climax of the month was the worldwide celebration of World Mission Sunday on October 22, 2000, the official “Jubilee of Missionaries.” On a beautiful sunny day, seventy thousand faithful jammed into St. Peter’s Square in Rome, Italy, together with fifty bishops and seven hundred priest concelebrants. Pope John Paul II emphasized: “Celebrating the Jubilee of the Holy Year 2000, the whole Church is even more committed to a new missionary advent. We must increase our apostolic zeal to pass on to others the light and the joy of the faith” (2000a:No. 8).

The pope dedicated his homily to analyzing the “meaning and style” of Christian mission. Recalling Christ’s example, he summarized its essence in four words: “service, poverty, humility, the cross” ((2000b:No. 4). Pope John Paul II then referred to “all missionaries who, day by day, in silence and without the support of any human power, proclaim and, even before that, witness their love for Jesus, often to the point of giving their lives, as happened recently” (2000b:No. 4). Five expatriate missionaries died in Africa in the month of October 2000 alone.

A special moment for this writer was the Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions). As the intercessions were read in Chinese and Arabic in clear, loud voices, one could only think: Along with the many languages of India, here is what the challenge of *ad gentes* mission is really all about: Billions of people are still waiting to hear the “Good News of Jesus Christ.” The intercession in Swahili by catechist Sylvester Changwa from Iringa, Tanzania, brought to mind the missionary challenge to Africa and the African saying “To be called is to be sent.”

At the end of the Eucharistic Liturgy, Pope John Paul II conferred his mandate on 12 missionaries who will evangelize in the different continents and gave each of them a cross. Several missionaries gave the pope some earth from all the continents in one pot, in which he planted a small olive tree. He commented: “An olive tree is planted in this ‘earth of all lands,’ a symbol of peace, in memory of this Jubilee Day. The gospel of Christ, in fact, is the gospel of peace. May all peoples open themselves to Christ and find the way of peace” (Healey 2001:141). This festival of world mission ended with the release of hundreds of white, red, yellow, green, and blue balloons, symbols of the five continents, soaring higher and higher into the clear blue October sky over *St. Peter’s Basilica* and symbolically announcing: “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). The Tanzanian delegates returned to Tanzania to share their mission-related experiences and reflections with people on the local level in their home parishes, SCCs, and apostolic groups.

Case Study: Use of the Book *Jesus, Source of Life for All* in Tanzania

Jesus, Source of Life for All, the book of working papers for the World Mission Congress that took place in Rome in October 2000, was translated into Swahili by

Father Alfons Ndekimo with the title *Yesu, Chanzo cha Maisha Kwa Wote*. Both the English version and the Swahili version especially were widely used by groups and by individuals for prayer, liturgical ceremonies, reflection, and discussion in Tanzania. Here are some concrete ways in which members of MAC used this book in the Jubilee Year 2000 to promote a conscious missionary spirit and praxis on the local level.

New Evangelization

In various places the book *Jesus, Source of Life for All* emphasizes the “new wave of evangelization” (World Mission Congress 2000:5), the “new springtime of mission,” and the theme of the “new evangelization” (World Mission Congress 2000:109). This theme was discussed during the MAC Meeting in Iringa, Tanzania, on April 4, 2000. It was agreed that the participants’ mission awareness activities during the Jubilee Year 2000 would be based on Luke 4:18–19: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.” The monthly Swahili radio programs of *Sisi Sote Ni Wamisionari* (We Are All Missionaries) on Radio Tumaini in Dar es Salaam focused on outreach and service to people with HIV/AIDS, refugees, street children, the sick, and other needy people. The MAC Mwanza Group visited ten SCCs in St. Francis Xavier Parish and shared and planned how local Christians can be missionaries in their own families and places of work, emphasizing that “everyone is a missionary” (Mission Awareness Committee 2000:8).

Specific Themes

Each liturgical season had a concrete missionary focus:

1. Lent: During the MAC Meeting in Iringa, the theme of the Eucharistic Celebration on Thursday, April 6, 2000, was “Reconciliation” in relation to the significant gesture for the Jubilee Year proposed in the book *Jesus, Source of Life for All* (World Mission Congress 2000:22). An Apostolic Group based in Dar es Salaam—Youth Friends of St. Francis (Vijana Rafiki wa Mt. Fransisko or VIRAFRA)—used the theme of “Conversion” in the book to reflect on their lives during the Jubilee Year. They focused on their inner journey and the renewal of both body and spirit. The youth also used the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the African Synod (Mission Awareness Committee 2000:10–11).

2. Pentecost: The book *Jesus, Source of Life for All* stated that the sending of missionaries was a significant gesture for the Jubilee Year. “This missioning is done by the Church under the impulse of the Holy Spirit” (World Mission Congress 2000:55). East African missionaries had (and continue to have) official “Sending Forth Ceremonies” in their home parishes to connect the mission-sending church to the mission-receiving church (see below).

3. Advent and Christmas: The reflections for the Advent and Christmas Season emphasized the contemplative dimension of missionary spirituality. “Mission has contemplation as its foundation” (World Mission Congress 2000:102). There were several practical suggestions: “At a diocesan and national level, to demonstrate by a visit the importance and worth of some places, or of at least one place, where the charism of contemplative life is lived. We suggest introducing people to a contemplative monastery making a pilgrimage to one or more of these places. Organize a

day of contemplative prayer for missionary activity. If there is not a monastery in the area, would it be possible to help found one? The future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation" (John Paul II 1990b:No. 91; World Mission Congress 2000:102–103). "At a personal level, make a prayer corner in your home—a place where you can recall the importance of the presence of God in your life. During the Jubilee Year spend at least a day in contemplative prayer in a monastery or another place that will ensure such an experience." (World Mission Congress 2000:103)

East African Missionaries Going to Other Countries in Africa

Some East African missionaries are sent to another country in Africa. Bishop Evaristo Chengula, IMC, the present Bishop of Mbeya, Tanzania, worked as a Consolata missionary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Bishop Augustine Shao, CSSp, the present Bishop of Zanzibar, Tanzania, worked as a Spiritan missionary in Zambia. Sister Rita Kimolo, MC, a Tanzanian Consolata Sister, had an official "Sending-Forth Ceremony" in her home parish in Kondoa, Dodoma Diocese, on March 19, 2000. She was "missioned" to Liberia in West Africa and received various gifts that symbolized her missionary commitment. The liturgy, celebration, and related events helped her family, friends, and the local parish community to feel part of her missionary vocation and future missionary ministry in Liberia.

In 1999 there were 99 Kenyan members of religious missionary institutes working in other countries in Africa (Mondo and Bozza 1999). Here are three personal testimonies (priest, Sister, Brother) from the 19 letters written by Kenyan missionaries working in other parts of Africa in *Letters from the Missions: Our Sons and Daughters Missionaries around the World* (Mondo and Bozza 2000):

In Ethiopia: I am a missionary in Ethiopia. I am doing something I call "evangelization of presence in silence." Ethiopia is rather a Catholic "environment." Orthodox Christians are the most numerous. In principle and theory, we are "more or less the same." In practice, we differ a lot. Like anyone else, we are seen as intruders coming to steal their Christians to our church. The outcome of these attitudes is violence and competition.

To avoid this, I opted to witness humbly: just presence in silence. My pastoral work throughout the week is basically among young people aged between five and eighteen years. I organize activities for them that are not specifically church oriented but society oriented. Practically, I never organize prayers, as any Catholic Church would do, but, of course, because there are a number of Catholics (about 56) on Sunday, we have the Eucharist celebration. During the week there are about seven people who appear constantly. We have activities that normally attract the young. (Father Nicholas Makau, IMC, Consolata Missionary) (2000:27)

In Rwanda: Two months before my profession, I got my missionary assignment letter to Rwanda. Being my first assignment, I became very afraid. The situation in Rwanda was very bad at that time. I was full of fear, doubts, and I wasn't sure of myself either. I had a retreat after this, soon before my profession. I was able to bring all my worries, doubts, and my helplessness to God. Deep down, I knew that God had a reason for my going to Rwanda. I felt called for something I didn't know. I felt that there was something waiting for me, and unless I was open enough to it, it will never happen. So I felt encouraged, energized, and ready to go. I came to Rwanda in 1996. . . .

At the moment, a lot has changed as a consequence of the war. Many people have been traumatized; they live in fear, doubts, and even lack of trust. The war has done a lot to old and young, children and all. Being here has taught me a lot: patience, trust, at least how important it is to have a sense of humor and taking the day as it comes. A few missionaries have been killed since I came here. It is a fearful situation at times. We still hope and trust [that] one day there will be peace. (Sister Rose Ngaruiya, MMM, Medical Missionary of Mary) (2000:35–36)

In Madagascar: Here in Madagascar half of the population is Catholic and the other half are from other denominations—Muslims, Christians, etc. We use the Malagasy or French language, so we have to learn two languages. Jesus is sending me here as one of the apostles to preach the good news to the poor. . . . People here are much poorer as compared to our people in Kenya. Many times poor people, almost half naked, come daily to our home to beg from morning to night. Here we have a free school for the poorest of the poor, a feeding program for undernourished children, and many other programs for poor people. . . . Since I arrived here, I received love from these poor people. They are happy we have come to help them and be a part of the Malagasy people. (Brother Bernard Muoki, MBC, Missionary Brother of Charity) (2000:34)

A recent development is African Fidei Donum priests, that is, diocesan priests from an African country who are sent to another country. In 1996 Cardinal Josef Tomko, then the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, asked the bishops of the Ugandan dioceses with many local priests, to send missionaries to other dioceses in Africa that have few, or even no, local priests. So Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese in Uganda, with over 80 local diocesan priests, sent two priests as missionaries to Aliwal Diocese in South Africa in 1999. They have gone for a three-year term that is renewable. Kampala Archdiocese and Masaka Diocese also sent Ugandan Fidei Donum priests to South Africa. In addition, Masaka Diocese sent priests to Rwanda. Nakuru Diocese in Kenya has sent a diocesan Fidei Donum priest to Malawi.

East African Missionaries Going to Other Continents

Mombasa Archdiocese in Kenya has sent two priests, Crispin Oneko and John Malasi, as Fidei Donum missionaries to Kingston Diocese in Jamaica, in the Caribbean, West Indies.

Oneko in Jamaica: Here I am in charge of St. Boniface Catholic Church and its Mission Churches of Mary Mother of God (Murray Mount) and St. John the Apostle (Grant's Mountain). I also take care of another Church that has no priest; it's an hour's drive passing Fr. Malasi's parish. It is called Holy Name of God (Bamboo) and its Mission Churches of Holy Spirit [are] Claremont and Monique. Apart from this, I am the chairperson of two schools. We also care for the marginalized through the "Widow's Mite," a home for the mentally handicapped who have been abandoned, together with HIV and AIDS children. Apart from this, I give seminars, talks, recollections, and retreats to schools, colleges, groups, and communities. I have Bible Study [and] prayer meetings, and we are beginning Small Christian Communities.

It's a real challenge to be here as a missionary. The culture is very different, together with the lifestyle. You have to explain everything to the root; one has to talk to people well ("kuwabembeza"). However, the Holy Spirit is doing marvels. There

is so much hope here, thanks be to God. Places like Sagalla, Bamba, Taru, and Marafa in Kenya are much better off than some of the places I go to in Jamaica. I am happy to be here. I feel [that] I am in the right place, and I feel appreciated by the people. I know what it means to be a missionary as St. Paul speaks about it. (Mondo and Bozza 2000:4)

Malasi in Jamaica: I serve in St. Ignatius Mission. It has outstations with names like Discovery Bay, Runaway Bay, and Wattown. All are in the civil parish of St. Ann. At the moment my main focus is the main mission and Discovery Bay. I go to Runaway Bay once a week and Wattown once a month. On Sunday we have congregations of 70 or less. It is a real challenge as there are so many churches and the Catholic Church is the least favored because of its many rubrics and the question of the devotion to Mary, the Pope, and other issues. In the families we find a variety of denominations. Catholics often feel shy to show themselves, so we are engaged in a program to make them feel more confident and to bring back the lapsed members. It is no easy task. We are also involved in ecumenical activities. This seems very helpful to bring people together. We had ecumenical services the whole of Lent, and we are looking forward to the same thing this coming year. Ministers pray and preach to the people in the different churches.

It has been an eye-opening experience for me. I am not one year old here on October 26. I have also become the Diocesan MC, and there is not a lot to do like in Mombasa. At present Fr. Oneko is with me, as he is changing parishes. He will be officially installed in the new parish on October 21. We take the chance to speak Swahili and enjoy ugali [cornmeal mush]. (Mondo and Bozza 2001:5)

Archbishop Raphael Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki of Nairobi Archdiocese in Kenya is planning to send ten Kenyan Fidei Donum priests to East Germany. Cardinal Maurice Otunga, the retired Archbishop of Nairobi stated: "Until Nairobi Archdiocese sends priests, Brothers, Sisters, and lay missionaries to other parts of the world, the Church in Nairobi is not a mature, established church" (1985).

In 1999 there were 69 Kenyan members of religious missionary institutes working in other continents such as Asia (13), Europe (7), and North and South America (49). (Mondo and Bozza 1999). Here are three personal testimonies (priest, two Sisters) from the 14 letters written by Kenyan missionaries working in other continents in *Letters from the Missions* (Mondo and Bozza 2000):

In Colombia: I work in the most violent area of this country. My parish is in a department called Putumayo, [which] lies at the border of Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. The people who live here are mixed. There are whites of Spanish origin that come here to work in the army, do business, or cultivate cocaine deep in the forest. There are also Indios who have always lived here. They are very poor and most die without visiting a big town. However, each home has a television set. This place is full of soldiers of different groups who kill, now and then, the people whom they think are not on their side. Living here as a priest, one feels that many people have a great inclination to kill. The value of life is so weak, really. One thing that strikes a newcomer here is that these people have a great devotion to the dead, more than those who are living. The violence is so deeply rooted that we should join hands to seek divine intervention. . . .

Sometimes one lives in tension, but I am having a wonderful experience. Sometimes people ask me why I had to leave Kenya, [which] according to them is in

great need of an African priest. Who can even dare to stay in such a conflict area? Well, partly I do agree with them, but on the other hand, as a Kenyan missionary, I have come to discover that my country has very good cultural values that are deep in the hearts of the people and should be shared with others. For example, we have the value of life. (Father Peter Kariuki, IMC, Consolata Missionary) (2000:11)

In Sri Lanka: I'm very grateful to God for giving me this chance to serve him among the poorest of the poor in Sri Lanka in the midst of a terrible war and poverty and also with people of a different culture. Jesus is still telling us that He is thirsty, and it is our aim to quench the thirst of Jesus on the cross by giving love to those in need. If you want to witness to Christ, you must give until it hurts.

Here we have a lot of children who have no parents and who have been badly affected by the war. There is a lot of mobbing and shelling but we are not afraid because God will never abandon us in the midst of these difficulties. Many people are very kind and generous; so far they have not done any harm to priests and [the] religious. Their culture respects both young and old people. Very often the store is empty, but by evening people come with donations and food to feed our sick people. (Sister Valentine Esther Wacui, MSC, Missionary Sister of Charity) (2000:21)

In United States of America: I live in a predominantly Catholic state, and one problem we encounter here is coldness as far as the Catholic faith is concerned. Many Catholics are just nominal Catholics and do not know anything about their faith. I pray daily that our people in Kenya may never grow tired of their faith. I am involved here in the parish with the RCIA, that is, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This is a program in catechesis for adults who want to join the Catholic faith but have been baptized in other churches, and [those] who have never been baptized. It is a challenging mission because we meet people who do not take their faith for granted and ask very difficult and challenging questions about our faith and our doctrine. This has helped greatly to deepen my faith because missionary work is "giving and receiving."

During the summer I get involved in summer school for the children in rural areas or in the inner cities. Here we meet the most disadvantaged of all Americans, especially in the inner cities. We also discuss the Bible and Christian living with the elderly. (Sister Susan Ng'ang'a, CMS, Comboni Missionary Sister) (2000:20)

Evolving a Narrative Missiology

These letters (including personal testimonies) from Kenyan missionaries around the world are a source of narrative missiology. The locus of a narrative theology of mission is our personal, community, and cultural stories (Van Engen, Thomas, and Gallagher 1999; Healey and Sybertz 1996). These moving letters graphically describe how the Catholic Church in Kenya is now a missionary church, a church in mission. Until a few years ago, the missionary challenge seemed directed only to Christians from other continents, especially Europe and North America, to come to Africa. Now the young churches of Africa, the children of a still young evangelization, accept the call to live out this missionary challenge themselves in different African countries and in different continents. Truly the Catholic Church in Kenya has come of age. Kenyan missionaries are spreading the good news of salvation "to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). Like the famous mission diaries of old, these letters portray both the personal struggles and searching of the African missionaries themselves and the methods of their missionary evangelization. Particularly moving are the personal tes-

timonies of living among Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia, Rwandans traumatized by war, the marginalized in Haiti, victims of violence in Colombia, and the poorest of the poor in Sri Lanka.

Reflecting on these letters, the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Giovanni Tonnucci writes to these Kenyan missionaries:

Living the missionary experience in other countries and continents, you will have a deeper understanding of the suffering of the first missionaries who came to Africa: how to learn new languages, understand new people, enter into the hearts of persons having cultures so different than ours, . . . suffering, fatigue, and at times, making mistakes. But nothing to fear: even mistakes can serve their purpose in helping us to find the right direction and in reminding us that this work is not ours but God's. (Mondo and Bozza 2000:3)

All these letters from the mission field need to be further studied and reflected upon for their rich theological and methodological (praxis) insights.⁹ Some emerging missiological themes in these letters from East African missionaries are presence in silence, patience and trust that peace will come, a sense of humor, preaching the good news to the poor, living among the poorest of the poor, hope in the Holy Spirit, ecumenism, great devotion to the dead, living in areas of tension and conflict, appreciating African cultural values, and the value of life and missionary work as giving and receiving.

These letters portray a theology of communion, solidarity, and mutuality. "We need this oneness, the support of each other and a common awareness that we are doing the same thing vis-à-vis preaching the gospel," wrote a priest in Tanzania (Mondo and Bozza 2000:43). "The people, and above all the local church in Kenya, support me on my mission. . . . We have to indeed support one another in our mission," declared a priest in Costa Rica (2000:14). "We represent the whole Catholic church of Kenya here in Colombia," claimed a priest in Colombia (2000:12). "We thank the church in Kenya and our Religious Institutes who sent us to share our gifts with the people we work with and receive their gifts as well," a Sister wrote from the United States (2000:19). Mission promotion "is indeed a great blessing for the Kenyan Church and the universal church," proclaimed a Sister in Tanzania (2000:38). This missionary ministry is rooted in communion ecclesiology and portrays a communion of local churches on six continents.

Supporting East Africans to Go in Mission

As of January, 2003 there were "438 Kenyans from different congregations and dioceses working in various parts of the world as missionaries" (Mondo and Eigner 2002:1; Mondo 2003). These are Kenyan missionaries in many African countries and in other continents who registered with the Mission Promotion Centre in Nairobi. This is a dramatic increase from 250 registered Kenyan missionaries in 1999. The annual mission collections organized by the Comboni Mission Promotion Team in Kenya in 1998 were used to support a Comboni Missionary Sister in Eritrea and a Missionary Sister of Charity in Haiti. The mission collections in Kenya in 1999 were used to support four Kenyan missionaries working outside Kenya, from the following religious congregations: an Evangelizing Sister of Mary serving in Tanzania, a

Missionary of Africa priest serving in Malawi, a Comboni Missionary Priest serving in Mozambique, and a Consolata Missionary Priest serving in Colombia. The money was presented to representatives of these four congregations at a special ceremony at St. Paul's University Chapel in Nairobi on November 19, 2000.

The mission collections in Kenya in 2000 and 2001 assisted a Medical Missionary Sister working in Ghana, a Comboni priest working in South Africa, and an Apostle of Jesus priest working in Ethiopia. The mission collections in Kenya in 2002 assisted two Fidei Donum Priests from Mombasa Archdiocese working in Jamaica, a Consolata Sister working in Mozambique, and a Comboni priest working in Eritrea (Mondo 2002:7).

Participation is a very important value in African society. This direct financial help encourages local Catholic communities in Kenya to be involved in missionary outreach, to feel part of mission *ad gentes*. Joined with the people's own prayers, sacrifices, and evangelizing spirit, this shows that the African Church is truly missionary.

Missionary Significance of the Data and Examples

This study presents a wide variety of data and examples on East African (Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan) Catholic missionaries working in other places in their own country, in other countries in Africa, and in other continents. Similar data could be presented on East African missionaries from a wide spectrum of Christian churches. The increasing number of African missionaries being sent throughout the world is striking.

Within their own countries, these East African missionaries—priests, Brothers, Sisters, and laypeople—are reaching out in various ways. Some from larger, more-developed Catholic dioceses go to areas in their country where the Catholic faith is not well developed and the Christians are fewer. Lay Catholics are realizing that they can be missionaries and apostles in their local situations. They are consciously promoting missionary parishes through SCCs, the RCIA, the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood, the wide use of the media of communications, and various missionary awareness programs and activities.

East African missionaries going to other African countries are living witnesses to the saying "missionaries to our own continent." They share the poverty, violence, civil unrest, and uncertainty of many African countries. Presently 19 of the 53 African independent countries are in some kind of civil war, internal unrest, or violent tribalism situation. Yet these missionaries reflect a joyful spirit, a deep confidence in God, and a determination to be with, and serve, the local people. Fidei Donum priests, once a project of the local churches in Europe and North America, are now being sent by African local churches to their needy sister churches in other countries in Africa.

As East African missionaries go to other continents, there are different trends. In Latin American and Asia, they are mainly involved in grass-roots evangelization, especially in poor and violent situations. In Europe and North America the trend, especially for priests, is to do mainly pastoral and sacramental work in a parish setting, where they are making up for the shortage of local priests. As such, they are not involved in specific mission *ad gentes*.¹⁰ Yet the spirit of pastoral service of these Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan missionaries is clear everywhere.

All this has important ramifications for the future shape of global Catholicism, global Christianity, and indeed, our whole world.

Notes

1. For African Christians (and Christians everywhere) the baptismal call is a missionary call. Pope John Paul II describes “the baptismal vocation as a missionary vocation” (1987:297).
2. Scripture quoted in this study comes from the New Revised Standard Version.
3. With 82 percent of the world’s population in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, these people can also be called the “Four-Fifths World.”
4. Pope John Paul II’s speech was on the occasion of the celebration of the centenary of evangelization in what is now Moshi Diocese. He praised the first missionaries, the Holy Ghost Fathers (now called Spiritans), who came from Europe and North America. The African Spiritans have established their own missionary East African Province, with headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.
5. There are many other Catholic missionaries from other African countries working outside their country of origin on the continent of Africa and in other continents, for example, missionaries from Nigeria. There are also many conciliar Protestant, evangelical, and Pentecostal East African missionaries working in their own countries and around the world (Follis 1997).
6. Entering the words “African Missionaries” in the Google search engine on the Internet produces 102,000 hits or web pages. These references cover many meanings of the term including missionaries from Africa and missionaries to Africa.
7. AMECEA comprises the eight countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.
8. The core of this committee are members (representatives) of the seven exclusively missionary-oriented congregations and societies strictly speaking in the Religious Superiors’ Association of Tanzania (RSAT): Apostles of Jesus (AJ), Apostolic Life Community of Priests (ALCP) in the Work of the Holy Spirit—Opus Spiritus Sancti (OSS), Consolata Missionaries (IMC), Maryknoll Society (MM), Missionaries of Africa (MAfr), Society of African Missions (SMA), and Spiritans—East African Province (CSSp). The Swahili name is “Kamati ya Kuhamasisha Roho ya Umisionari,” which is translated literally as “Committee to Motivate a Missionary Spirit.”
9. It is striking that mission letters and mission diaries are much less important in this contemporary age of instantaneous information technology. E-mail messages are carrying a tremendous amount of communication from missionaries.
10. A document from the Vatican in April 2001 cautioned: “This exchange [of diocesan clergy] among the churches, the fruit of universal communion, must preserve a strong missionary thrust to counteract the prevalent trend of a certain number of diocesan priests who, incardinated in their particular churches in mission territories, want to leave their own country and reside in Europe or North America, often with the intention of further studies or for other reasons that are not actually missionary. Often their motives are based on the higher living conditions which these countries offer and the need for young priests in some of the established Churches” (Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples 2001:No. 2).

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