

# Mission Diary

July-August 2005



## The Mexican Spiritan Mission Apostolic Group - 2005

by Francis J. Kichak, C.S.Sp., San Antonio, S.L.P.

Mexico, May 1, 2005

Spiritually and Sacramentally our people in four missions in the Potosina Huasteca and one in Tampico and one in Cd. Madero, as well as our newest mission in Pantepec, Puebla, are being well served by our Mexican International Mission Group. Today our group consists of 25 priests and religious members - three from the USA-West Province, two from the Irish Province, three from the French Province, one from the Canadian Province, three from the Polish Province, one from the Trinidad Province, one from the Province of Nigeria, one from the Province of Angola, two from the Province of Portugal, four from the Huasteca Potosina of Mexico, one from San Luis Potosi, Mexico, and one from El Higo, Vera Cruz, Mexico. Presently, there are nineteen active members working in Mexico.



Also, there are six members working outside of Mexico - two in Paraguay, one in Bolivia, one in Spain, and two in Mozambique. At the moment, we have seven Mexican seminarians pursuing their philosophical and theological studies in our Spiritan Seminary in the City of Mexico. Most of our priest members are relatively young, i.e., between the ages of 30-45; two range between 65 and 78!

Besides evangelization and sacramental work in 34 years in the Huasteca, the Spiritans have contributed also to the building up of the Local Clergy and our own Congregation in Mexico. Our missions have given one mestizo and one Huastecan diocesan priest from Tanlajas, one Huastecan diocesan priest from San Antonio, three Nahuat diocesan priests from Coxcatlan and one mestizo diocesan deacon from Tancanhuitz de Santos. In addition, Tanlajas has given one Huastecan Spiritan priest and one Huastecan Spiritan deacon; Coxcatlan has given one Josephite mestizo priest and one Nahuat Spiritan priest while Tancanhuitz has given one mestizo Spiritan priest. The Josephite mission of Aquismon has given us one Huastecan Spiritan priest.

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### WHY I AM RETIRING TO HAITI

A Reflection from Fr. Albert J. McKnight, C.S.Sp

I have many reasons for retiring to Haiti. It is a saga which began in 1969, but the actual thought of retiring in Haiti was a sudden one which hit me like a thunder bolt. If someone had told me a week earlier that I would be retiring to Haiti, I would have thought them out of their mind.

I was on a plane September

28, 2004, returning from a retreat with the students of the University of Fondwa. I was experiencing conflicting emotions. On the one hand I was elated from the retreat I had with the students of the University; on the other hand I was depressed over the ecological disaster that caused over 250,000 people to become homeless as a

result of the hurricane in Gonaives and the lack of international assistance.

I was reading *The Presence that Disturbs*, a book by fellow Spiritan priest Fr. Anthony Gittins. It had been unfinished by my bedside for over two years, and I had decided to take it with me to Haiti. This is the passage which struck

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me: *“Where are the indications that the Holy Spirit, in our time as in every age, is trying to make all things new to renew the face of the earth? Should we not be awake and alert to the Spirit’s creative disturbance of the status quo? Should we not ready ourselves for a New Pentecost, stand up and be counted, nail our colors to the mast, and seek to be led forward by the life-giving Spirit?”*

*“Our common Christian tradition assures us that God will never break the covenant; Jesus will never leave us orphans, and the Spirit will not cease to be committed to making all things new. The challenge for all of us Christians is to remain faithful to God and seek to discern and respond to the Spirit’s promptings.”*

It became crystal clear to me that the Holy Spirit was summoning me to Haiti and had been preparing me over the past 36 years to make this momentous decision.

In 1969 I was about to complete a program, funded for two years by the Ford Foundation, to organize cooperatives in four southern states. We named the new financial institution the Southern Cooperative Development Fund (SCDF). Charles Prejean, the Executive Director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, requested that I help organize a financial institution for the cooperatives.

Some of the cooperatives had developed to the stage where they needed loans but were unable to obtain them from conventional sources. For example, Southern Consumers Cooperative, the first

low income cooperative in modern times, needed a \$5,000 operating loan for its fruitcake business. Despite the fact that the organization had property valued at \$30,000 with no encumbrances to collateralize the \$5,000 operating loan, the banks would not make it.

The Office of Economic Opportunity, a federal agency, gave the Federation a grant of \$500,000 to get the corporation started, but none of their funds could be used for staffing. The Campaign for Human Development, an operation of the Catholic Church, gave SCDF a grant of \$50,000 a year for three years. I became President of the group, and the first staff person I recruited was Martial Mirabeau, a Haitian financial analyst who had recently come to the USA and was willing to take the job at a very low salary.

He became my right-hand man for over 20 years. It was his financial expertise which enabled SCDF to become a very strong financial institution for the cooperatives. Because of Martial, we had a board meeting in Haiti, a very depressing place because of its material poverty. At that time I was totally blind to its spiritual richness, and I avoided every opportunity of going there again.

In 1994 another Spiritan, Fr. Joseph Philippe, invited me, along with several international practitioners of loan funds to the poor, to an exploratory meeting in Miami. Martial and I attended. He later organized Fonkoze, a financial organization for the organized poor in Haiti. Fr. Philippe requested that I serve on the Board of Fonkoze

USA. Reluctantly, I accepted saying that I would serve for only one year, because I dreaded visiting Haiti.

It was at the first board meeting in Haiti that I learned that 85% of Haitians survive by selling something. This information radically changed my opinion about Haiti. Having spent over 25 years in cooperative development I knew that economic development of a community does not depend upon how much financial resources enter the community, but how many times the financial resources circulate within it.

The African-American community has over 800 billion dollars income annually. There are not ten other countries in the world that have greater financial income, and yet they own and control very little economic resources and cannot provide jobs for one another, because what enters the African-American community does not circulate even one time. In the ordinary community, financial resources exchange hands six times before leaving the community.

Having over 85% of Haitians survive by selling something means that over 85% of Haitians are entrepreneurs. If Fonkoze is successful in accumulating sufficient resources to enable its borrowers to become self sufficient, then Haiti has the opportunity of becoming a model of economic development outside of globalization. **This would be real systemic change.** I decided to accept re-election to the board of Fonkoze for three years.

I am a firm believer in the *chaos*

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*theory*. The New Universe Story involving 15 billion years of the evolutionary process teaches that creativity depends upon destruction. Every change requires the death of the old. The paschal mystery is a cosmic reality. Jesus had to die in order to rise. Nothing new comes into existence until the old dies. The *chaos theory* demonstrates, however, that there are limits to the destruction which gives birth to the new. As long as the status quo is maintained, nothing new is created. I perceive the present chaotic situation in Haiti as the necessary prelude to a New Haiti. Haitians were the first group of slaves to gain their political independence. They celebrated 200 years of their political independence in 2004; so Haiti, through the University of Fondwa, is completing its revolutionary destiny by igniting a **Revolution of Love**.

Several years ago I had a very close friend who became the President of Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi. A group of us went to Jackson State several days a month for a year meeting with students and faculty. After a year we were unsuccessful in having even one individual committed to undertaking the inner spiritual journey with a group.

At the June retreat with the students of the University of Fondwa in Haiti, however, many students committed themselves to undertake the spiritual practice. At the September retreat there, many students had kept their words and were actually doing the two simple practices of: 1) **saying every day “I know me. I accept me. I love me.**

**I forgive me. God lives within me”,** and 2) **spending fifteen minutes a day in silence with eyes closed doing nothing.** I was elated.

I have preached to church congregations of several hundred people urging them to undertake these two simple practices. When I return a month or so later and ask for a show of hands of how many have actually undertaken the practice, I am blessed if one hand is raised.

The University of Fondwa was established by Fr. Joseph Philippe to serve the rural needs of Haiti where most Haitians live, and it has three disciplines; namely, management, horticulture and veterinary medicine. It is a six-year curriculum. All the students are recruited from rural communities and make a commitment to return to their communities after graduation. The curriculum requires each student to develop a project in their community during the course of their studies.

I have always maintained that the urban problems of cities will never be resolved until the rural areas can provide economic incentives for the young to remain in their communities. The problems of Port-au-Prince, a city built for 100,000 people but now the home of 2 million people, will never be resolved until the rural areas can be developed to offer economic opportunities to the young.

Another reason I will retire to Haiti is from the inspiring commitment of two women. Ann Hastings has been to Fr. Philippe what Martial Mirabeau is to me. Ann, a busi-

ness consultant from the USA, volunteered to work for one year with Fonkoze. She has been there many years now, and has helped to develop Fonkoze into a very strong, people-oriented institution. Fonkoze Financial Services, a spinoff from Fonkoze, is a multi-million dollar micro-lending institution with more branch offices than any other financial organization in Haiti. It has developed an international reputation.

Last November, Fonkoze, under the leadership of Ann Hastings and Dr. Paul Farmer, the founder of Zanmi Lasante, an outstanding health provider, sponsored a Summit with some of the most successful international micro lenders. There were representatives from Bangladesh, Cameroon, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic. They came to the Summit to apply in Haiti solutions that have worked in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in helping people to get out of extreme poverty. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh has had world-known success in helping over 85% of its borrowers get out of extreme poverty.

How to eliminate extreme poverty is known. It has been done in some parts of the world. The non-government agencies that participate in the Haitian Summit hope to do it in Haiti. As Ann Hastings said at the windup of the Summit, “What we are trying to do in Haiti is take a country of manageable size, one and a half hours from the richest country on the face of the earth, and take all that we’ve learned globally and put it into practice in one department in this country.”

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The other inspiring woman for me is Renate Schneider, another volunteer from the United States who came to work with the University of Fondwa as secretary to the President of the University. During last year's uprising in Haiti that expelled Aristide, most of the top officials of the University who were foreigners left the country. Renate Schneider stayed and saved the University. She is doing an outstanding job with the students and present staff.

For several years I have been burdened with the consciousness that I am living in a state of social sin by living in the United States of America, the richest country in the world, which has so much material wealth and wastes so much irreplaceable resources; and yet is so poor spiritually. The USA has the resources to feed the whole world, yet over 40,000 children die each day because of starvation. Billions of people cannot eat a full meal a day.

Many people in this country are homeless. Many are without proper medical care. The USA has the highest infant mortality rate among the industrialized countries. During the last forty years the values of individualism - anything for money, dog-eat-dog competition, and the arrogance of power - have become so exaggerated that American culture itself has become dehumanizing, despiritualizing and psychopathological; that is, mentally sick. The United States of America has caused over 100,000 Iraqi civilians to be killed in the war against Iraq. These grossly immoral conditions clearly demonstrate the tremendous

lack of love for one's neighbor. The United States needs a **Revolution of Love**.

Although I was unable to ignite the flames of love in the United States, I see Haitians completing their historical destiny by giving birth to the **Revolution of Love**.

Just as Haitians were the first group of slaves to win their political independence and assisted other peoples to win theirs, so Haitians today are fulfilling their historical destiny by giving birth to the **Revolution of Love**, which will spread to other peoples.

Haitians, who are extremely poor materially but very rich spiritually, will influence the people in the United States, who are very rich materially but extremely poor spiritually.

I intend to return to the United States fairly frequently to keep contact with my doctors and be a bridge spreading the flames of the **Love Revolution** from Haiti to the United States. I will plan speaking tours every time I visit the United States.

I have been a novice director for the last four years in San Antonio, Texas. The Western Province of the Holy Ghost Fathers do not have any novitiate candidates for 2005-06, so there will not be a novitiate in the Western Province after August 6, 2005. This leaves me free to retire to Haiti. I thank the Provincial Council of the Western Province for supporting my decision to retire in Haiti.

Diarmuid O'Murchu's prayer to the Holy Spirit is very meaningful to me. "*Come Holy Spirit, breathe down upon our troubled*

*world. Shake the tired foundations of our crumbling institutions. Break the rules that keep you out of all our sacred spaces. And from the dust and rubble, gather up the seedlings of a new creation. Come Holy Spirit, enflame once more the dying embers of our weariness. Shake us out of our complacency. Whisper our names once more, and scatter your gifts of grace with wild abandon. Break open the prisons of our inner being and let your raging justice be our sign of liberty. Come Holy Spirit, and lead us to places we would rather not go; expand the horizons of our limited imaginations. Awaken in our souls dangerous dreams for a new tomorrow, and rekindle in our hearts the fire of prophetic enthusiasm. Come Holy Spirit, whose justice outwits international conspiracy; whose light outshines spiritual bigotry, whose peace can overcome the destructive potential of warfare, whose promise invigorates our every effort to create a new heaven and a new earth, now and forever. Amen.*

When one dreams alone the dream remains only a dream, but when many dream the same dream, they can make the dream a reality.

Become an active participant in developing the first university committed to developing "professional lovers", that is, to love the way Jesus loves us with the skills and commitment to work in their rural communities.

I have come to set the earth on fire and how I wish it were al

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## Why I am Retiring to Haiti (conclusion)

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ready blazing. This is the time of fulfillment. It is the right time. The basileia, the new reign of God, is at hand. Reform your lives. Be reconciled and believe in the good news.

Participate in the revolution of love.

Do ordinary things with extraordinary love. 1 Cor. 13:4-7: *Love is patient and kind, it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs, love is not happy with evil but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope and patience never fails.*

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

### This is the Teaching

To practice the teaching, we must first love ourselves, the more we love ourselves the more we can love our neighbor. The more we love our neighbor, the more we can love God.

### A Vision Statement

I am full of loving kindness. I am peaceful and serene. I am healed. I am happy. You are full of loving kindness. You are peaceful and serene. You are healed. You are happy. We are full of loving kindness. We are peaceful and serene. We are healed. We are happy.

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### Endulen Diary

Vol. 20, #5  
May 2005

#### *Gathering ends in sadness*

Bulati is a very, very isolated area of the highland region on the far side of Ngorongoro Crater. Since it is on the almost inaccessible Eastern rim of Mbakai Crater, no outsider ever visits there. Mbakai is an incredibly beautiful, wooded crater whose bottom is entirely taken up with a lake populated the year round with flamingoes. The Maasai say the lake is bottomless.

Nearby at Bulati we were in the midst of a service in our small Maasai Christian community. Just about the time the gifts of bread, wine, milk and butter were being brought to the altar in procession, we heard the movement of many people and the sounds of excited voices outside our mud-walled, grass-roofed church. Fearing some

calamity was taking place we stopped our Eucharistic celebration and all trooped outside to see what was going on. A young warrior lay on a roughly-made stretcher of cow skin stretched across saplings. About fifty of his age mates stood around the motionless figure. The warrior had been gored by a buffalo some three hours' walk to the East in the heavily-wooded mountains. He had been on a honey collection expedition with other young men and had surprised a bull buffalo in a thicket. Giving the warrior no chance for retreat, the buffalo charged, hooking his horn through one side of the warrior's lower abdomen and out the other side. A good portion of his intestines came out with the horn. Hours later they reached Bulati on their expected two-day trek to the nearest hospital. Surprisingly enough, he was still very much alive and even able to talk, but of course in deep shock and in a lot of pain.

We were in luck having the jeep there, and after finishing our service, we put him in the car on the laps of three of his warrior friends. The two-hour trip back to my base outstation here at Nainokanoka was a nightmare. We traveled slowly, but the "road" is just a track through the forest and across the flatland. The way is very bumpy, pitted with potholes and strewn with rock. He groaned constantly at the erratic movements of the car. Arriving at Nainokanoka, we called the offices of the Conservation authority on the other side of Ngorongoro Crater for help. They sent a Toyota Land Cruiser fitted out as an ambulance. The young warrior was still able to speak a little as we loaded him in the Conservation car some hours later. The young man lived for only a short time after finally arriving at the hospital some six hours later.

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**Lekishon tells his story.**

My name is Emanuel Lekishon Shangai. I was born at Endulen village, but in 1985 we moved to Alamunyani because of the long drought that resulted in many of our cattle dying. I grew up in a poor family. Our cattle were raided by the Sukuma in 1982. Due to the loss of our cattle and the fact that cultivation was not allowed in the Conservation Authority of Ngorongoro, we made the move to Alamunyani. There we cultivated a small plot using a hand hoe. In 1992 the small scale cultivation was again allowed in the Endulen area of the Ngorongoro Conservation Authority, and we moved back to Endulen and acquired a small plot for cultivation. In 1991 I had been enrolled in the primary school at Arash near Alamunyani. These places are on the North side of the Serengeti and outside the Ngorongoro Conservation Authority. In 1994, having completed grade 4, I transferred to the Endulen primary school where I completed my primary education in 1997. In 1998, I joined Osotua Prep School and began to realize the possibilities for my life and the importance of education from Fr. Ned and the teachers there. I studied for a year at Osotua where I got a lot of experience from different teachers, especially Mwalimu Moinga Ikayo, a most kind and knowledgeable teacher.

In 1999, I got a place at Kilimanjaro Boys Secondary School and completed Form IV there in 2002. When the results were published I found myself on the list of those that had passed and

been chosen to go on to Form V. I looked for a scholarship to continue, but was not successful in getting one. I went to Mwanza on Lake Victoria hoping to find a job as a security guard, but the pay offered was so poor that I didn't take the job and continued to look here and there for a job to enable me to pay for my continued studies. Nothing materialized, and finally I returned to Endulen very much discouraged. In 2004 Fr. Ned was in a position to help me again, and I went back to Kilimanjaro Boys for Form V & VI. I am now just beginning Form VI that I hope to complete this year. My dream is to go on to University.

I give thanks to all who are helping me and other Maasai young people. I want to tell to all Maasai boys and girls that nothing can be impossible in the world if you work hard and don't give up. . .

- Lekishon Shangai

**Endulen Diary**

Vol. 20, #6 - June 2005

As we begin the second half of 2005, I am happy to report that our Osotua Maasai Education Program has 38 Maasai girls and 31 Maasai boys in secondary and technical schools throughout Northern Tanzania. Also, we will be sending three Maasai girls to begin Teacher Training College at Tanga on the 25th of July. Another one of our Osotua girls will soon begin a three-year "Assistant Medical Officer" program under the auspices of Salien Lutheran Hospital at Machame Hospital on Mount Kilimanjaro.

**Panin's Story . . .**

I am Panin Olorpurkoi Kerika, a Maasai boy of 22 years old. My father who is of the alteritoi age group (now very old man), married three wives, and we are 13 children in my family. I am the third born of my mother who is the second wife among the three. One wife died and the other ran away to leave my father, and he remained only with my mother. In 1989 my father was ordered by the government to give a child for school. He was told to send my older brother. He didn't want my brother to go because he was the only one of us of an age to herd the family cattle. Instead, he promised the government to give a child in the coming year. In 1990 I was taken to school even though I was very young, so young that I couldn't reach my left ear with my right hand by reaching over my head. This is the traditional test to determine if a child is big enough to go to school.

In fact it was not the intention of my father to take me to school, but rather he was forced to do so by the government. Always in Maasailand, in those years, school was the place to take the children who were least favored physically or mentally. Parents believed that a child taken to school would be lost to them, alienated from village and even from Maasai country. They believed that the child would never be seen again.

I completed my primary education in 1996, and then I stayed one year in our family village home. During that time my father took me to a certain group of people who have power to confuse the brains

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**Endulen Diary - (continued)**

of children so that education is hateful to the child, and he or she finds it impossible to learn anything. (These people are called *irkiporoon*.) My father took two of us to those people, the other was a brother who had also completed primary school. After I observed how the *irkiporooni* totally confused the brain of my brother, I refused to go to them again. Then I decided to go to Osotua Preparatory School where I met other Maasai boys and girls preparing to go to secondary school. I went to Father Ned, and he allowed me to join in 1998. I spent one year, and in 1999 I was chosen to join the Arusha Catholic Seminary. My father refused that I go to secondary school, but my mother was on my side and advised me to call together some sympathetic elders. These men convinced my father to let me continue my education.

In 1999 I started Form I at Arusha Catholic Seminary where I completed in 2002. My results were good enough to go on to Junior College (Form V & VI), but I could not look for a school because Fr. Ned was away in the States getting his second hip replacement. I stayed at Osotua Prep School in Endulen and helped out with the teaching there for the space of a year. I continued to look for sponsorship to continue at school but didn't find anyone to help me.

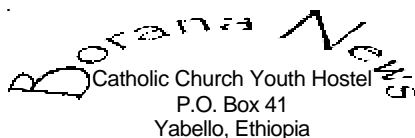
Immediately after Fr. Ned came back from America I went to him and first of all I gave him "Pole" by giving him a goat as a welcome home gift. I wanted to thank him for helping me until I completed "0" level studies. And after I explained what had happened to me, he agreed to help me again. We applied to Kilimanjaro Boys Secondary School and I was accepted there for Form V & VI. I am now in Form VI and doing well.

My advice to other Maasai boys and girls who find their desire for an education blocked by family and others is not to give up. You will succeed in the end . . .

*Panin Olorpurkoi*

Till next month,

**Ned**



June 30, 2005

Dear Friends,

*Jila Guddo* is a Borana expression meaning "special event" . . . There are a few of those on the horizon this summer!

Today I am traveling to Addis Ababa to meet my provincial superior from the United States, Father Jeff Duaimé. He's making his first trip to Africa to visit Ethiopia, Tanzania and South Africa; all places where American Spiritans are working. As I think about it I am asking, "What will he see in Ethiopia different from the United States?" After thirty-eight years on the continent my vision may be a bit clouded and not in tune with a first-time visitor's view.

Ethiopia is mentioned in official lists as the poorest or the second poorest country in the world, depending on whose list you're looking at. So Fr. Jeff will see unending beggars in Addis Ababa and in any town we may visit on the road to Yabello. It is a religious duty promoted by both the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Moslem religion to help the poor. These are the two major religions in Ethiopia. There are many truly poor people here, but also quite a few who have learned to use the "charity" system to get something for themselves. So people asking for handouts are endless in Addis Ababa or in any other town one visits. Much of the hous-

ing matches the poverty of the people. Small corrugated houses are very common. What we will also experience at this time of the year in Addis Ababa is daily rain. It is the rainy season for that part of the country. The rain is necessary and welcome. But at an altitude of over one mile it makes for very cool days and uncomfortable nights if one has to be outside.

I don't know the figures for the unemployment rate in Ethiopia, but it must be at least 25%. Compared to 6 or 7% in the United States, 25% is high. At any street corner and any other place where people can gather, men and boys from teenagers to older men will be

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standing around with nothing to do. Ethiopia is primarily an agricultural country. There is very little industry to give employment to the thousands of people who could work but can't find a place to do that. The women and girls, by the way, are not visible. They stay at home or are involved for some hours of the day waiting for water at the few available water outlets or doing whatever work there is in the house. I'm talking about the capital, Addis Ababa. In the smaller towns like Yabello the women and girls will also spend part of the day collecting firewood for cooking the food or just keeping the house warm.

Addis Ababa lies at an altitude of 8,600 feet above sea level. As you leave Addis Ababa and drive south the road gradually drops lower in altitude. The town of Awassa, which is half-way to Yabello and also where our bishop lives, is around 6,000 feet above sea level. All along that 190 miles of country at this time of the year people will be harvesting their corn or weeding the fields of *teff*. *Teff* is the most common grain grown in Ethiopia and is used to make the most common food of the country, *enjera*. *Enjera* resembles a soft piecrust. It can be rolled when served for food and is eaten by breaking pieces off and dipping it in a soup made of either meat or vegetables.

By the time we reach Yabello, 385 miles from Addis Ababa, we'll be at a comfortable altitude of 5,400 feet above sea level. The climate is different, the countryside is also different. Dry country special-

izes in producing thorn trees, mostly acacia. Maybe that's nature's way of preserving the trees from animals that might eat them. The thorns are a real inconvenience for car tires, but the trees are picturesque standing in the plains surrounded by grass; especially if the grass is green, as it is this month.

Two hundred miles to the north there is corn, coffee and teff in the fields. Around Yabello there is only grass for the cattle, goats and camels. It's too dry most years for any gardens. The rolling countryside is beautiful, but while we're traveling on the road we have to be ready to stop at any time for the cattle and goats that the boys invariably heed near the road. I often ask myself what the animals eat on the paved road. But they do seem to spend a lot of time on the road. Unless they only go there when they hear a car coming, which I don't think is quite true.

Another thing Fr. Jeff may see on this trip, which isn't always the case, are the number of soldiers and police along the roads, especially around Addis Ababa. Last month there were elections for the parliament in Ethiopia. Many people accused the incumbent government of dishonesty during the elections. There have been demonstrations in the cities. Many people have been arrested, especially university students. It seems that the government is afraid of anyone who has an education. That's not too surprising, since most people in the government were guerilla fighters in the mountains until they took over the

government in a coup eleven years ago. Not too many highly-educated people among guerilla fighters. Since the elections I've heard that there are many soldiers and police visible in the cities. I haven't been there myself to see them. Yabello is too small to worry about, and the people here are more interested in getting food to eat. They aren't too interested in politics. We're all waiting to see when the tension will ease up.

Enough about the coming week. Now I'd like to mention what I'll be doing for the rest of the summer. This week the last of the students will leave the hostel and go to their families. That will mean a vacation of sorts for me as well as for them. Then on August 2nd, I'll fly to the United States for a month's break to celebrate my sister's golden anniversary in religious life. Sr. Theresa and I haven't actually seen too much of each other over those fifty years. She spent sixteen of them in Puerto Rico, and I've been in Africa most of the time. But fifty years of dedicated service should be celebrated, and I'm happy to be part of whatever that means for her.

In conclusion I'd just like to say that I hope you all will remember the Borana and me during the summer months and continue to pray for them and me. And I look forward to seeing those of you I can during the month of August.

Sincerely,

**Father Vincent Stegman**