



My Sojourn in Mission

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*“Whatever turns up, grab it and do it.
And heartily”*

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Abstract/Summary—From an early age Ruth sensed God directing her to Africa. Her sojourn in mission reflects a deep confidence in God, as together with her husband Ross they served intermittently four decades in eastern Africa during some challenging times. Her story is best summarized in the words from Ecclesiastes 9:10, “Whatever turns up, grab it and do it. And heartily.” To that end she took up the challenge and soon found herself involved in everything from being a trainer of Sunday School teachers, a Bible teacher, a high school English tutor, marketer of eggs, village evangelist, nurse, area team leader, veterinarian. Looking back over the journey, Ruth feels privileged to have served God with the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya and South Sudan.

—Editor CACook

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“What did you do on the mission field?” many people ask. It’s a hard question to answer. The best reply may be found in Ecclesiastes 9:10 of *The Message*, “Whatever turns up, grab it and do it. And heartily.” As the Lord put before me various challenges, I found myself a trainer of Sunday School teachers, Bible teacher, high school English

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tutor, marketer of eggs, village evangelist, nurse, area team leader, veterinarian—and that’s not all. What a privilege to serve, intermittently at times, from 1961-2004 with Africa Inland Mission in Kenya and South Sudan.

My mission sojourn began in Dunnville, a small town in southern Ontario, where I attended a mid-week children’s meeting called *The Mission Band*. Occasionally a visiting missionary would speak and I was thrilled when one from Japan chose me to model a kimono. Another time I was captivated by the stories of a missionary from Africa and at supper that evening I retold them with great enthusiasm. And so the desire to be a missionary was planted in my heart. But as I entered my teen years, I began to participate in activities which I realized should not be part of a missionary’s life, so I put that aspiration aside.

My mother called me “The Depression Baby” since I was born on August 17, 1929, two months before The Great Depression began. My father was a stone mason and earned \$11.00 a week; my mother, a nurse, earned the same amount. One sister completed the Bennett family. We didn’t hear about Christ’s redemptive work at home, however we did hear about God at Sunday School. Grandma Bennett died when I was 6 years old but I remember visiting her by myself. Since I always found her reading her Bible, I was sure she must have read it through many times. Later in life one of my older cousins told me that Grandma would be proud of me because when she was young she wanted to be a missionary. I’m sure Grandma’s prayers had a great effect on my life.

As a teenager I longed to know God better. He was way up somewhere—not close to me at all. Church attendance was part of my life but the sermons in our United Church left me dangling half-way to God. I even tried to read my Bible but didn’t understand it.

When I was 16, I went as a waitress to Fair Havens Bible Conference near Beaverton. Shortly after my arrival, I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour. Right away I felt a joy flood my heart and one of my first thoughts was; “Now I can be a missionary.”

After high school, I entered nurse’s training in Hamilton, just 50 kilometres from home. Upon graduation, I went to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and it was here that I had an extensive exposure to foreign missions through

classes, visiting missionaries and daily prayer bands representing different countries. In 1953 I graduated from a combined Missions-Christian Education course.

Upon returning to Canada, there was a long period of waiting before I eventually went overseas. I made enquiries to several missions but nothing developed. Meanwhile I worked part time as a nurse in Hamilton and also practiced my Christian Education training in my church. Then I contracted a severe type of polio and was at death's door. A few weeks before, I had been interviewed by the deputation secretary of Africa Inland Mission but somehow thought Africa was not for me. In hospital I was too ill to pray much, although I do remember telling the Lord, "I'm ready to go to heaven but if I get better, I'm willing to go to Africa." God chose to heal me; however there were months of recovery. Through it all I learned that it's better to ask the Lord, "Where shall I serve You?" rather than tell Him where you think you shouldn't go.

I love books and these biographies had a great impact upon my understanding of missions and the cost involved: *Behind the Ranges, Biography of J.O. Fraser of Lisuland; In The Arena* by Isobel Kuhn; *John and Betty Stam, Missionary Martyrs; The Autobiography of Hudson Taylor.*

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Shortly after I was accepted by the Africa Inland Mission to go to Uganda, I met the person who taught me the most about missions and who breathed what he believed about accomplishing Jesus' Great Commission, my husband-to-be, Ross Alloway. At the end of a 5 year term of service, Ross lost his first wife to cerebral malaria and returned from Kenya with three children. Our paths crossed at AIM meetings and eventually Ross asked if I would consider going to Kenya, not Uganda. "Hakuna matata," I replied.

And so it was that on May 5, 1961, I set sail for Kenya, a bride of two months and a mother of three children, Sharon, John and Philip, ages 8, 5 and 3. Ross and the children were returning to Sitotwet, their former station amongst the Kipsigis people where we would be the only missionaries. On our first home assignment five years later, we adopted David and we had 4 children for twelve years.

In March, 1978, John and his bride of 6 months were finishing their flight training in preparation for missionary service when they were killed in a mid-air collision. AIM sent a plane to our isolated station of Lokichogio with the news. Ross and I both felt God's hands reaching out and holding us up in this time of sorrow.

In 1961, the Sitotwet area had 16 churches meeting in schools or under a tree. Sitotwet itself had a mud and thatch building that had been the Alloway home before a stone house was built. The churches were led by elders and soon after my arrival, the first young men were chosen to attend Bible School; however when they graduated they were not given positions of leadership in that elder-led culture. Ross had been

ordained by the Africa Inland Church in 1957, so although he was not the decision maker, he was the Bible teacher and preacher. He also performed marriages, baptisms and communion services. I noticed his humility, always giving deference to the church elders. Even when he was pushed for time he would patiently sit and talk to all who came. Today there are nearly 500 churches in the district, some with permanent buildings, and there are many ordained nationals and trained leaders. Another lesson I learned from Ross: he never criticized Christians, whether nationals or missionaries. After studying the Kipsigis language, my mission efforts revolved around the needs of the church such as adult literacy with the women, organizing women's Bible conferences as well as training Sunday School teachers and mid-week club leaders.

Samwel was nine years old before his father released him from herding the cows and allowed him to attend Sitotwet Primary School. When he was 15, he and his friend John came and asked if we had any work for them so we gave them little jobs when they weren't in school. On Saturdays they joined us for a short worship time in our house. In 1963 we moved 50 kilometres away for Ross to begin and be Headmaster of Litein High School. Neither of us were trained teachers but Ross had a degree in science. I loved English so I taught Composition and Literature; the official language in Kenya is English. Samwel was in the first class and after completing two years he began teaching and eventually went on to Teacher's Training. After we left Kipsigis area in 1969, Samwel attended the Sitotwet training school for elders and was assigned to a large area where there was only one church. Today there are fifty congregations in that district. Samwel is now a retired teacher and is devoted full time to church work; he is married to Alice who ministers to women.

One early morning in March 1968, Ross, 17-month-old David and I were flying to Loglogo, an isolated station 600 kilometres north of Nairobi in the Kaisut desert. The afternoon before at Sitotwet, I was bringing in clothes from the line when a small vehicle entered our yard. After taking missionary Earl Andersen into the house to find Ross, he announced, "Esther is very ill and we were flown out of Loglogo this morning. The rains have made the road to our place impassable. I think it will be several weeks before we can return. Could you people go and relieve us? The only flight available this week is early tomorrow morning."

A few months before, the mission asked for volunteers who would be willing to take the place of missionaries in isolated areas when an emergency arose. Only two couples responded and we were one of them. "Yes, we'll go," Ross replied since he knew we both had the desire to serve in unreached areas.

It was a scramble but in a few hours we were on our way so we could spend the night near Nairobi and be ready for the 8 a.m. take-off. The one and a half hour flight in the small Missionary Aviation Fellowship plane took three hours since the pilot had to search for a break in the clouds in order to pass through a mountain range.

Earl and Esther had put up a tent at Loglogo two years before in order to begin a work amongst the nomadic Rendille. We lived in the house they built which had three small rooms. It was a duplex and two schoolteachers lived on the other side. Since they only had a back door, we got used to the men taking a short cut straight through our house—without knocking of course. Our outside walls were banked with a three-foot pile of stones to protect us at night from stray bullets in case of an attack by bandits who roamed the countryside. We heard no gunfire but only the strumming of Esther's guitar by the crickets which invaded the house at night. We appreciated the nets that kept both mosquitoes and crickets out of our beds.

I supervised a young man who was running a clinic in a small mud and thatch hut. One day a nomad brought his wounded camel for treatment; a hyena had torn a hole in its abdomen. Ross kept busy with teaching and preaching the Word as well as doing some building. After three weeks, a plane came to take us out; we could stay no longer since we needed to collect our other three children from boarding school for April vacation.

The next year we returned for 17 months to relieve Earl and Esther when they went on home assignment. During that time, some boys were ready for baptism. There was no place to carry out the service, so Ross devised a method to build a temporary tank. A shallow grave-like hole was dug and lined with a canvas tarpaulin. Then pails of water were dumped in. Over twenty years later, a man approached us as we stood outside a church in an area far away from Rendille country. "I was a school boy at Loglogo when you lived there. In fact I was baptized by you."

Next we were assigned to Kalokol on Lake Turkana amongst the nomadic Turkana, a tribe of 250,000. We had a few days of orientation before we were left alone in the desert where fierce sandstorms daily arose and blotted out the searing equator sun. There had been a drought eight years before and all the Turkana's animals died. The government established a famine camp for thousands of people at Kalokol and sent men from other tribes to run it. Most were Christians and they built a palm leaf church and encouraged the Turkana to attend. Shortly after we arrived, the camp was disbanded and the Christian administrators left. It took many years for the Turkana to respond to the gospel and the church to become indigenous.

Lake Turkana teemed with tilapia and Nile perch, so to help re-establish the people, AIM began a fishing business, teaching the people how to use nets and then dry their catch to sell to a co-operative which in turn trucked loads to areas where people ate fish. The Turkana ate meat, even crocodiles, but fish was food only for children. Twenty years later when I invited a church elder to a meal, he refused to eat my fish pie. By the time we arrived at Kalokol, the government ran the co-operative.

During our three years at Kalokol, I did some nursing in the clinic and began home-schooling David. Ross and the non-Turkana headmaster held young people's meetings in our home Sunday evenings. Also the students filled the back of

the station's Toyota pick-up and went on evangelistic trips to the fishing villages. In addition to that, there were building projects for Ross to supervise.

Nestled between two mountains near the Sudan border was the isolated Lokichogio police post which boasted a few tiny metal buildings and a small dirt airstrip. Rainfall was more plentiful here so the Turkana often brought their herds to graze. In order to obtain water for the animals, the women dug wells by hand in the nearby dry river bed. Our mission made medical trips once a month by plane and I went on a few of these safaris. Once, after the last patient was treated, a Turkana approached and asked me to come and see his daughter who had a broken leg. The evangelist and I accompanied him deep into the forest. "What happened to her?" I asked.

He explained that the day before Akiru was down in a well at the river. It was near the end of the dry season so as the water level dropped, the hole was gradually enlarged to ten metres across and nine metres deep. Eight girls and women perched on the niches along the sides, handing up calabashes of water from one to another, finally reaching the men at the top who filled the wooden troughs. At least this well hadn't caved in. When that happened a natural grave was formed and the site never used again. But yesterday the thirsty cows began jostling and one fell in, killing a woman and injuring Akiru.

I ducked and crawled into the small house made of tree branches and when my eyes adjusted to the darkness of the windowless hut, I saw Akiru lying on the dirt floor; she was unconscious and must have been 15 years old. There was a deep gash on her head and her right thigh was swollen. Someone had splinted the leg with an animal skin. I told the father that we could take her by plane to our hospital but he refused. Digging into the medicine box, I gave her an injection of long-lasting penicillin, dressed her wound and left medicine for them to administer. We prayed with the family and then hurriedly left to be on time for the plane's departure. We must reach Kalokol before darkness descended. Upon my return several months later, a girl was led to me by two smiling parents. I noticed the scar on her forehead and the slight limp. It was Akiru.

In March of 1973, Ross and I made the 12-hour trip to Lokichogio with plans to begin a permanent work there. The road had not been graded for over a dozen years so it was a "pick the best route you can find" situation. We plunged down deep gullies and then searched for the easiest way to ascend. Arriving after dark, we quickly found a place to camp but didn't bother to pitch our tent until the next day. In the morning I opened my medicine box under a tree and began to treat the many who came. Ross and the missionary who accompanied us chose a site to build a school near a well that possessed a hand pump.

The next year, the government graded the road. It was a quick fix with no bridges or culverts installed, but still a real answer to prayer. Our house changed from a tent to a 12 metre trailer which we could now tow the 295 kilometres from Kalokol to Lokichogio. It was March and the dry season ended as soon as we arrived. A short distance behind us, a

Land Rover was swept down a river. The rains authored havoc on the road making it shoddier than before it was graded. But since this was the main road to Sudan, it was eventually paved about 15 years later.

During our seven years at Lokichogio, a community project was developed which included health, schools and installation of wells. A number of agencies were involved: Africa Inland Mission, World Vision, Christian Blind Mission and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). The Kenyan Government dug the wells.

Centres for evangelism, clinics and schools were started. Lopur was one, over 100 kilometres from Lokichogio. Ross, David and I camped there twice to help start the work, the first time for six weeks. We made our home under a shady tree by the river bed and there I set up school for eight-year old David. Two years later we returned for three months to put up more buildings. This time we had two tents—one, which rested on top of the cab of our Ford pick-up, we opened only at night. David's school was under the awning of the other. We often saw 70 metre columns of swirling dirt hurtling toward us over the otherwise calm desert. The two of us would stand up facing the whirlwind as we prayed and sang. Again and again God changed the direction of the ferocious dust devils and we gave Him our thanks. Twice a day David and I made the half kilometre trek to the shallow well in the dry river bed to fetch a pail of water. After placing it on a pole, we each grabbed an end and walked back to the tent. First the murky liquid drained through sand and stone in our home-made filtration plant and then the clear water was boiled to kill the unseen enemy. The two pails must meet all our daily needs but our priority was to have enough for drinking.

At the end of our Lokichogio sojourn, the sparse rainfall failed and a drought developed. Thirsty, starving donkeys wandered the countryside and eventually dropped dead. The scorched landscape was brightened by red meat which had been cut in long thin strips and strung on cords to dry. The Turkana's usual diet of milk mixed with animal blood was no longer available. The nomads knew their hungry animals were dying so why not rescue the meat? It could be stored and used gradually. Already there were human skulls amongst the animal bones scattered everywhere. Our missionaries began helping the people by encouraging them to make charcoal which they bought so the Turkana could buy food at the Lokichogio stores. The charcoal, which is the affordable cooking fuel of Kenya, was resold and transported to southern towns. Sadly, as the trees were cut and burned, we saw the forest disappear. It took many months of famine relief and, even after the rains returned, much longer for the Turkana to reestablish their herds so they could provide their own customary meagre diet.

In May 1980 we crossed the nearby border into Sudan and moved 180 kilometres to assist in reaching the unreached Toposa. They are related to the Turkana but are arch enemies, raiding each other for cattle and killing anyone in sight. We left a dry Kenya to encounter the rainy season of our new country. Twenty transport trucks were lined up at one wide flowing river which would ordinarily contain no water. And

they'd been waiting for two weeks for the waters to recede. Thankfully the Lord arranged it so we arrived the day the drivers felt it was safe to venture across. That afternoon we checked into the immigration office of Kapoeta town and continued on to our new mission station of Lokorimor in the district of Riwoto, 20 kilometres away.

The official language of Sudan is Arabic but the education in the south is in English. Since there were few schools, not many spoke anything but their tribal tongue and a simplified Arabic. We chose to adapt our Turkana which the Toposa understood because of its similarity to their language. The Khartoum Arab government would not permit missionaries to enter Sudan, so Ross came as a builder. He certainly had supervised lots of construction but now there were no builders to hire, just untrained workmen. The other two missionaries on the station were nurses, thus I entered as Ross' wife. We were under the umbrella of Voluntary Service Group, the name used by AIM in closed countries.

Shortly after Sudan obtained independence from Britain in 1956, the south began a guerilla-type war because of the restrictions and neglect imposed on them by the north. In the early sixties, the Khartoum government expelled our missionaries along with others. After a peace agreement in 1972, the south was granted partial autonomy and aid work was allowed so AIM began re-opening former stations. Riwoto was one. We only knew of one man who had been influenced by the gospel preached there years ago.

In one year I walked to over 75 nearby villages, visiting many two or three times. Upon entering one of these large family compounds, I wandered around calling the people to come and pray. One day I began my short message with the question, "Who is Jesus?" I paused a few seconds, not really expecting an answer. Then a beautiful young lady cried out, "We don't know. You tell us."

Twice a week I walked to the Riwoto School, one of three Primary schools in a tribe of 150,000, where I taught the Religious Knowledge class to the two top grades. The brightest and most eager student was James Lokuuda Kadanya, who decades later would become an outstanding Christian leader amongst his own people.

Every work day began with a short meeting at 6:30am. One morning Ross asked me to pray. The dreaded dry season should end soon so it seemed appropriate to include a request for rain. There wasn't a cloud in the sky but an hour later the heavens opened and a mighty deluge descended. After a rainless two weeks, I repeated the prayer and in a couple hours a torrent fell. One of the workmen came to me a week later. "Mama, we need rain. You better pray."

I explained that it was the Lord who gives rain, not me. Still, I did pray at our meeting and once again He answered. Why did God respond to my prayers so dramatically? Because God can demonstrate His power in any way He chooses. I never prayed for rain again. The next year there were believers who took on that role—and God answered their prayers.

In 1983 some startling news came over our short-wave radio. There had been an uprising against the government and missionaries taken hostage. The people of the south were

restarting the civil war because of the recent restrictions imposed on them by the Muslim north. Shariah law was going to be enforced and their government autonomy revoked. Money was a problem for the newly formed Sudan Peoples Liberation Army and hostage-taking was a source. Fortunately, the captured missionaries were rescued by the Sudanese government with some outside help. The SPLA was a force on foot and could suddenly appear without warning. We made plans so we wouldn't be captured—a code to use on the radio in case a soldier was present as well as a backpack ready to grab if we needed to walk out to Kenya and safety. However, we never had to put our plans in action.

It's not easy to discover all the cultural beliefs of the tribe you are living amongst as illustrated by the following incident. Our son David was helping unload the pick-up and grabbing his friend Lopeyok's sword, placed it under a tree. When the Toposa saw it lying on the ground, he began screaming. Running over and seizing the weapon, he turned to David, "I have to kill you," he shouted. The other workmen finally convinced him to stop yelling. One explained that Lopeyok's wife was expecting a baby and he must carry the weapon with him all the time because it symbolized his unborn child. Putting the sword on the ground meant a curse was put on the baby and it would die and be buried. The only solution was to kill the fifteen-year old. The warrior was certainly experienced in taking life. His body had many scars on his upper arms, chest and thighs, signs of distinction in battle. Each one indicated a person he had killed in cattle raids. After a long discussion, Lopeyok agreed to postpone the slaying until the baby was born. We all prayed together and asked the Lord to grant a good delivery and that the infant would live. The next morning Lopeyok arrived to announce the safe arrival of his baby. "And I don't have to kill you," he smilingly said to David. In honour of his friend, he named the new baby girl David. When we left for home assignment in 1984, there had been seven baptisms and Lopeyok was one of the candidates. He vowed never to go on another cattle raid.

Upon returning to Africa the next year, we were unable to go back to Toposaland because the SPLA had arrived in Riwoto. Instead, we were assigned to Keyala and would live in the vacant house of our team leader. Several weeks before, he and his wife were attacked in their Land Rover and she was shot by the bandits and died later that day. Two weeks after our arrival, we had a visit from the Bishop of the Sudan Africa Inland Church who had ridden his bicycle 50 kilometres from the town of Torit. "I don't think you should stay here," he announced. "It's too dangerous. The SPLA are just north of here and moving quickly this way." In a few days we moved into Torit. During our six week stay we heard the news that early one morning Keyala station was surrounded by soldiers looking for hostages. They looted and burned much of the compound. Juba, the capital of the south, was our next place of retreat. During our six months there we often heard shelling on the outskirts of the town. David had returned to Sudan with us as an agricultural volunteer for 9 months, so we flew with him to Nairobi to see him off to Canada and college. Then all flights to Sudan were temporarily cancelled because of

increased war activity—the SPLA were even shooting at planes as they landed or took off.

Throughout all the tumult in Sudan, we had perfect peace knowing that our heavenly Father was watching over us. Even though all our possessions at Riwoto were looted, we never lacked a vehicle to drive, a mattress to sleep on or food to eat.

In 1988 we were again assigned to Lokichogio since the civil war in Sudan was in its fifth year. The SPLA had taken over much of the south, but not Juba. However we were told there was no point in our return to Juba—the few missionaries living there realized they would soon have to evacuate.

In 1990 we obtained permission for a week's church survey in the area taken by the SPLA. Accompanying us was a Sudanese whom we planned to leave in Torit; Sirisio was the first AIC pastor to return to the "liberated" areas. During the trip he was given more freedom of movement than we were; we always had a soldier nearby watching us. On the first day we returned to Riwoto to a place where hundreds were gathered to celebrate generational transitions. Many remembered us and were excited about our visit. We asked and received permission to go to our former home but we would have to walk in from the main road since the liberation movement did not travel where there were no car tracks—they feared an encounter with a land mine. We found only one of the three houses remained and it was leaning at a precarious angle. Ours only had the cement floor. In the distance we could see the tin roof of the church, but there was no time to go there. The sun would soon set and we must get back to Kapoeta town. As we departed the next morning, we met some Toposa friends at the edge of town. We had heard there were no church services being held because there were no teaching materials, so we gave them Turkana Scriptures, Toposa hymn books, a hand-wind tape player with Christian tapes and other supplies.

During that week we visited many places—one a station where Sirisio had been the pastor. People flocked to visit with him from early morning until dark. He learned that sometimes only three people gathered to worship at the church on Sundays. "Sheep need a good shepherd," he remarked to us. The houses there were in fairly good condition. When General John Garang, leader of the SPLA, marched through once, he told the people, "Don't destroy these houses. One day the missionaries will return." Many years later his prediction came true. In Torit the AIC members were not given any rations by the liberation movement since the church had no relief food to contribute. There were no provisions available to buy and the people could not go out of town to plant gardens since government bombers could suddenly zoom over and drop their deadly loads. One evening we invited Sirisio to eat with us but he refused saying, "I will have to learn to do without food."

At the end of the week, we said good-bye to Sirisio and a faithful frail Christian, Isaac. The old man began his farewell prayer with, "Thank you, thank you, thank you, Lord." He now had Sirisio to care for him; they would share the hard times together. We could also say, "Thank you, Lord, for the

privilege of our trip to Sudan, especially for the return to Riwoto.” Four months later we left Kenya, thinking our missionary service had ended. However, God had other plans.

In February, 1993, we were invited to join the staff of the Eldoret Missionary College for one year. This school in the Kenya highlands trains nationals from many African countries to serve as cross cultural missionaries. Ross was the school treasurer and bookkeeper; he also taught carpentry, mechanics and went on outreach with male students. When the women left their home areas to be missionaries in a different culture, they would have to cook with the ingredients available. Soybean milk, banana yeast, mango doughnuts, papaya jam, sausage, peanut porridge and lentil soup were a few of the foods we created in cooking class—all produced on single charcoal burners. On Thursday afternoons I drove two of the women down pot-holed trails and across fields to fulfill their practical work assignment. We met up with a Christian woman who arranged meetings in various homes in her district—but she always had to milk her two cows first. I was also the headmistress of the nursery school for the four and five-year old children of the students and local residents. Five days a week I opened the college health office and treated up to 15 patients. When the families went on their practical term-out assignment, Ross and I spent several week-ends visiting them in their isolated locations. Not only did we evaluate their ministry but we left them with food, kerosene for their lamps and words of encouragement. It was a rewarding year to witness nationals preparing to take the gospel to unreached areas.

The next year found us back in the sandstorms of Turkana to replace a couple who had gone on home assignment. The mission told them to try and find their own replacements, so they thought of us. We lived in their house in “the suburbs” of Lodwar, the government centre of Turkana. We were only there one week, when we travelled north to our former station of Lokichogio since a nurse wanted me to replace her while she spent a few days in Nairobi. I was in the latrine one evening when the silence was shattered by a loud bang. “That’s gunfire!” I called out to Ross who was waiting outside.

“I know,” he replied calmly, “you’d better hurry.” Was it a Toposa cattle raid? We’d been in the midst of attacks but they usually occurred during the daytime when the animals were out grazing. One time the Toposa stole hundreds of cattle but the police helicopter located them and the animals were returned. Sadly four school boys were killed during that raid. This time Ross and I entered the house where we were staying and took shelter in the safest place, the shower. The shooting eventually stopped and next day we found out no Toposa were involved. A Turkana was showing his anger at a fellow tribesman.

In Lodwar between four to ten patients appeared in front of the house early each morning. Poor people didn’t usually go to the government hospital. Although seen by a doctor and given a prescription, they didn’t possess money to buy medicine and I treated them free of charge. Each Friday at 3 pm I trudged across the burning ground, a Turkana New

Testament in hand along with a folding stool draped over my arm. Hanging from my shoulder was a drum which I beat constantly while praying that the women would come to the appointed tree for our meeting. Once I sat drumming for 15 minutes before 12 children arrived. When a little girl claimed the drum, their singing filled the desert stillness. Soon three women came; there had been ten the week before. Sometimes I was asked to speak at conferences in the big church in town.

Most Sundays Ross preached at churches that had sprung up in the suburbs. During the week he visited in huts with Francis, one of the evangelists. On Tuesday evenings Francis and some other young men came to our house for Bible study. The church asked Ross to do the bookkeeping and to teach one of their members the technique. Many people came to us with their financial needs and we helped out when possible. There were youth needing school fees or money for uniforms. A lady needed a new roof to replace the one a whirlwind removed. I wondered if Ross would have any clothes left to wear home—he was always giving them away: a jacket for a teacher’s graduation, another to an evangelist who had his one and only begged off him, a pair of trousers to Francis and two pair to a high school graduate along with money to have them mended.

The searing heat gradually became hotter so we began sleeping under mosquito nets in the fenced back yard. But by 9 p.m. the outside temperature just cooled down to 38° C. However we enjoyed our 7 month stay in Turkana and rejoiced to see how God was building His church from the time when the first missionary arrived 35 years earlier.

It was nearly eight years before we were asked to return to Kenya, this time to the bustling seaport of Mombasa. The Lord knew we had a desire to go back and that it must be at the request of the mission and African church. There was a need for teachers at Pwani (coast) Bible Institute. Our Recruitment Secretary surprised us with the question, “How would you two like to go to Pwani and teach?” Ross and I just looked at each other and knew the answer. During our seven months in Mombasa, Ross celebrated his 80th birthday.

I enjoyed teaching English grammar but my favourite course was one on Missions. The highlight was a field trip when we drove the class over an hour north to visit Rev. Joseph Nzinga and his wife Joyce, both graduates of the Eldoret Missionary College. He lectured about the methods used in beginning the work in an area untouched by the gospel. The first year was spent studying the culture and language, meanwhile making friends with and helping neighbours. The next year he walked to the far outskirts of the area getting to know people and telling about Christ. As small churches sprang up, he gradually witnessed closer to town where the mosque and opposition to the gospel were located. That afternoon we walked with some church elders to visit two nearby homesteads. The second was the village of a man who had six wives. He was called “the king” and was Joseph’s friend. Although he was away that day he had granted permission for our visit. I was given the privilege of sitting on a stool of honour which made me a member of the village. The students asked many questions of the church elders about

customs and church activity. The king allowed his wives and children to attend church although he didn't attend himself. However Joseph believed he would eventually accept Christ. The students and I were thrilled to observe cross cultural evangelism in action.

During the mission class I stressed the importance of future missionaries attending the Missionary College in Eldoret. One of Pwani's graduates, Kefa, took this seriously and four years later became a student there along with his wife. After this training, they were assigned by the Africa Inland Church Missionary Board to a hot, dry, isolated area where they were foreigners. Although often meeting opposition he is still there, along with his wife and two children, witnessing to the Pokot people.

I consider myself blessed to have been one of the thousands chosen by the Lord to serve in places where His church was not established. It is so rewarding to see nationals taking on that role and I'm thankful to have had a part in their preparation for fulfilling The Great Commission.

About the CMR Canadian Mission History Legacy Series—
“My Sojourn in Mission” is part of the *Canadian Missiological Resources (CMR) Canadian Mission History legacy Series*. The series encourages Canadians engaged in global mission to record their stories or the stories of others (past or present) in order to provide insights or lessons learned past global involvement that might help successive generations of Canadian mission scholars, international workers (missionaries) and church leaders. The CMR is a repository of information about Canadian contributions to global mission and provides a venue for thoughtful missiological reflection that is clearly Canadian.