

Chapter 5: Kale King, TSSF Guardian 1980-81

*Living the Gospel Now Conference
at Hillfield Friary, 1981. Left to
right: Dee Dobson; Br. Robert
Hugh; Kale King; Archbishop
Robert Runcie*



In 1980, Kale King, Dee Dobson, Helen Webb, Deane Kennedy, and Marie Webner were each nominated for Guardian of the Order—King won with Dobson and Webb coming in very close, unlike John Scott’s former landslide elections. For Chapter: Dee Dobson and Marie Webner continued with Keith Ackerman, Dorothy Nakatsuji, Jane Ellen Traugott, Lee Malloy, and George Metcalf. Peter Funk withdrew from all nominations.

Biography

(This is part of a series of essays entitled “My Franciscan Journey” done by members of the Land of Sky Fellowship in 1993)

While in seminary—though having met no members of a religious community—I was being drawn to find an Order with which I could associate in some fashion. I was looking for “Anglican” and “American,” but I was also attracted to the kind of itinerancy one finds in the life of Francis of Assisi. The stability of a monastery life was not really interesting. At the time the Order of the Poor Brethren of St. Francis, the Greyfriars, was very much rooted in monastic life at the Monastery of Little Portion, Long Island. I had inquired about some kind of association, but there was nothing attractive.

Just as my class was leaving seminary an underclassman told me about an English order, the Society of St. Francis. In time I found their address, wrote to the then—Minister, Brother Charles. He replied that since there were no SSF friars in North America, there was no possibility for an SSF Third Order. A couple of years later I discovered that there was an SSF friar in Canada, due north of where I was serving. In writing to him I was sent a copy of the *Third Order Manual* (see page 54), and I wrote my first rule at St. Francis-tide 1956. He suggested that the rule be “tried for a year and reported on from time to time.” However, by the time I sent off my first report, I discovered that he had already left the Society, and so I was “high and dry.”

Three years later I wrote for the *American Third Order Manual* (see page 13). It required assent to “Our Credenda as a treaty of peace and basis of the spiritual life.” (see pages 8 and 10) While I had no difficulty with most of it, several points put me off despite that they were to be taken as “pious opinions” rather than *de fide*. I did not follow through with the Third Order but, instead, became a Priest Associate. In early 1966, Brother Stephen OSF visited Idaho and assured me that the Credenda was no longer adhered to, and so I applied to be admitted as a postulant of the Third Order. The English Society was not completely out of the picture because I had met Brother Michael, SSF, when he led a week-long mission at St. Stephen and the Incarnation, Washington, D.C., in 1964. But, for the time being I had to be satisfied with this American Franciscanism. I was made novice by Brother Michael Thomas OSF, a member of the same class as Brother Mark Francis, and I was given the name in religion Boniface by Brother Paul, OSF, who directed the tertiaries. A year later Brother Paul succeeded Father Joseph OSF, the father founder, and my first formation director, and the American and English Franciscan bodies merged to create a Franciscan body for the entire Anglican Communion.

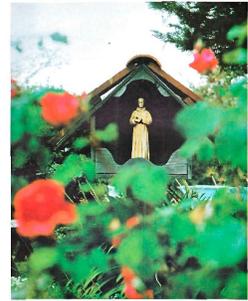
The merger of the First Order brothers led to the merger of the Third Order and its first gathering at Little Portion. At Brother Paul’s invitation, I attended the 1970 chapter-in-the-making and was somehow appointed or elected to the body and was a member for the next ten years. I was even elected Guardian in 1979, but a year-and-a-half later I resigned as the result of unrecognized stress and tension that grew out of serving the Church in Montana. However, I was fortunate, as Guardian, to attend the second Interprovincial Chapter, at Hillfield Friary in 1981, and the GOSPEL NOW Conference called by Brother Geoffrey SSF. I had also attended the 1976 Interprovincial Chapter at Bishop’s Ranch, California, and met representatives from the African, New Zealand, Australian, and English provinces. All the association over the years with the many American friars, and, later, the English friars, thoroughly convinced me that this was a religious body I truly needed and wanted to associate with. The GOSPEL NOW Conference affirmed that even more as we met with representatives of the First and Third Orders from around the world and considered how we might make the Gospel operative in our lives NOW.

I am richer in my spiritual life for having known personally Brothers Stephen, and Paul, Robert Hugh, David and Geoffrey and, to some extent, Brother Michael and, by correspondence, Father Joseph. I am richer for having shared the life of the Third Order with Peter Funk, my first formation director, John Scott and Dee Dobson, Guardians, Ken Cox and Alden Whitney, Formation Directors for Men, Robert “Gooch” Goode and Masud Syedullah, Provincial Chaplains, and a host of others on Chapter and throughout the Order. I am richer, for having become acquainted with the English Society’s foundations in Brother Douglas and Brother Algy, and the American Order’s in Father Joseph, and shared something of their vision for Franciscanism in the Anglican Communion.



*Probably at Chapter, Little Portion. From L to R:
Marie Webner, Br. Stephen, Dee Dobson, Kale King,
Muriel Adey*

As Provincial Secretary from 1971-78, Helen Webb edited the Franciscan Times from 1971 Issue 1 to January 1978 Issue 23. Her version of the Times was primarily filled with items of provincial-wide importance, the articles were long and substantial, the printing was a kind of quick-copy effort, and there were few if any pictures or illustrations. In 1978 Peg Shull began editing the Franciscan Times and continued to the Epiphany-tide issue in 1981. The Epiphany-tide issue pictured opposite was probably the handsomest issue ever produced of the Franciscan Times. It had color photographs, long feature articles, was typeset by a printer...and its single issue went 30% over the whole year's budget.



Vol. I, no. i.

Epiphany 1981

Resignation as Minister Provincial, August 1981

Kale King

Please come to the next meeting of the Third Order Provincial Chapter, in Seattle, 9 -10 November 1981, and be prepared to elect a Guardian to complete the two years that remain of the present Guardian's term, in accordance with the Provincial Statutes, II D 6. It was pride that let me accept the nomination and that led me to think that I had the time, the equipment, and the assistance needed to carry out the functions of the office. I wanted to believe so much that I was being obedient. Some of you for some time have been aware that I have not been fulfilling the expectations of the office. You were all too gracious in not speaking up. Those of you who have been praying that somehow it would all get straightened out for the good of the Order can now turn your attention to the election that lies ahead. The time has come to face reality.

I do hereby submit my resignation as Guardian of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis, American Province, effective at the conclusion of the 1981 meeting of Chapter in Seattle.

I shall concentrate these last three months in bringing about the successful gathering of Chapter and Convocation and the 800th anniversary observance of Francis' birth. Only those actions that must be made before Chapter will be taken, deferring all others until the new Guardian can assume the leadership.

My deepest thanks to those of you who have given me encouragement and a great deal of support. I must admit that Brother Geoffrey is correct in questioning the holding of this office by one who is an isolated tertiary. At least this tertiary, who has been isolated from the beginning of postulancy, sees how being a part of a fellowship would have made the office easier to fill.

The Chaplain should also plan to appoint another Area Chaplain for Idaho and Montana and the Novice Director should plan to transfer those reporting to me to another Counselor and remove my name from available Counselors. After eleven years I am tired. Chapter meetings and the one Convocation I could attend have been the only Franciscan fellowship I have had; my wife has had none except by telephone and letter. The annual gatherings will be missed, but it is time to go back to the ranks.

Response From John Scott August 30, 1981

Your letter of resignation arrived a few days ago. I will admit that I was feeling some concern that no special mailing had come for the Seattle meeting, but I was very glad that you did get to the Interprovincial meeting in England, and I was looking forward to hearing more about it. In the back of my mind I have expected to get to Seattle, and perhaps it is more important to make definite plans. Certainly no one is indispensable, but isolation and distances are problems for the individual as well as the Order.

What concerns me the most at the moment is you yourself. Guilt can be such a drag and enemy. Please do not feel that you have let anyone down. It is always a two-way street in the matter of support. I know that I felt like I had left you to grab the helm midway between chapter meetings and by the time I got to the Ranch last year realized that the transfer had been too abrupt and at the wrong moment in the sequence, and I felt guilty. Thank God the Lord can see it all and find ways to make up for our boners. But it is not only the matter of your feeling the necessity to step down. It is again you—and Amory—not feeling that the only option is to accept the isolation. As a matter of fact, you haven't entirely—Muriel and Lionel were with you for the big eruption last year, isn't that right? On the other hand, I know full well the feeling of being tired, and needing to let go of something, and nothing contributes to tiredness more than the frustration of not being able to deal with whatever situation the way it seems to demand....

Response From Chaplain Robert Goode (Gooch) August 31, 1981

Sorry to receive your letter, but glad if you feel relieved of something unpleasant. It takes a lot of courage to write something of that sort—though I think you have always vastly underestimated yourself.

You've always been a good peacemaker and have kept our meetings down to earth and full of humor.

We all do understand and don't think any less of you....

What are your thoughts about a successor? How about Dee [Dobson]?

Handwritten note from Kale

That we have managed to get to this point in the Chapter meeting and Convocation is the result of Dee's patient prodding, and Helen Webb's relentless loving correspondence and telephoning, though at last she may have conceded defeat. All who have prayed so hard and so long were the power, I'm sure, to help me over some hurdles I could not face.

But that is now largely behind us. We have a new Guardian who has carried a heavy load as bursar; she "knows the ropes." To Dee I can only say "You have my support, my prayers, and my encouragement, and my thanks."

Response from Br. Geoffrey, Minister General, SSF

September 8, 1981

Thank you so much for your letter announcing your retirement as the Third Order Guardian. It was such a joy to be with you at the Conference at Hilfield, and I do thank you for the enormous contribution you made. Being Guardian, as you have discovered, is a big and demanding job these days and, as you say, you have not had the time, equipment and assistance necessary to carry it out. Also, quite apart from that, I believe that in such a widely scattered province as America, the Third Order needs to have its main officers within fairly easy reach of one another because of the necessity of frequent communication. It is not easy to carry out the function of Guardian when this is not so, and I hope, personally, that when the new officers are elected at the Chapter this will be taken into consideration.

I do very much hope that you will not fade out altogether. You have much loving wisdom and concern, which we all need. While it is perhaps right for you not to be Guardian, I do very much hope that you will continue in some pastoral capacity as possibly novice counselor, etc. So much of novice counseling has to be done by letters due to the distances and therefore you may feel you could not do this, so please do continue to offer that at which you are best—the pastoral care of souls. I understand your tiredness but maybe after a break you will feel refreshed and able to take on this further ministry.

Seattle Provincial Convocation/Chapter November 9-10, 1981 (St. Thomas Center)



Br. Alan Barnabas (Province of Australia), Keynote Speaker



Novice Directors: Ken Cox (Men) and Glen-Ann Jicha (Women)



Br. Robert Hugh and Amory King

The Gospel Now was the convocation theme. Br. Robert Hugh and Sr. Cecilla both spoke in addition to the keynote speaker.

Left to right: Robert (Gooch) Goode, Marie Webner, John Scott, Bill Smith, Dorothy Nakatsuji

Response From Lynn Bowdish, September 18, 1981

...I wish you had not come to this decision. I have been and would continue to be very happy and content with you as Guardian. You are one to whom I can turn to and respect. I have appreciated your gentleness and loving approval. What the Order needs are these qualities—not an efficient and officious machine.

I have not been aware of any unhappiness on the part of any tertiary. I do not agree with Br. Geoffrey in questioning any tertiary's ability to be convenor, Guardian, or whatever. One does not choose to be isolated when it is a matter of miles as with you. I can accept that and support you. Only when some tertiaries—in the midst of others—turn their backs on their brothers and sisters—do I get impatient.

I feel a lot of pain in your letter. I wish that were not a reality. You continue to have my love and support—and prayers. I would hope that you would reconsider your decision to resign as Guardian. It is right that you cannot do all that you were doing. Even Jesus Christ would have difficulty with this institutional structure and all the paper work we create for ourselves. No one can be everything to so many. If you were to just give up Area Chaplain and Novice Counseling—and just be Guardian—is that a possibility? In a sense, it's not your failure—it's ours. We have not given you the support you or any other person needs. Being in a fellowship is not a cure-all. It brings with it as many curses as it does blessings. That should not be a determining factor.

Know that I and so many others love you. Do not let guilt pervade your life. Remember that Jesus thought he was a failure on Good Friday.

Kale King and Gloria Goller (local arrangements)



Back to front: Robert (Gooch) Goode, Dee Dobson, Glen-Ann Jicha, Dorothy Nakatsuji



John Dorman, Missionary Priest of Upper Mazaruni and Upper Cuyuni Region in Guyana

My Choice For National Heroes

Keith R. Williams (*Guyana Gazette*, May 31, 2006)

The criteria for heroes set...are virtually unreachable in Guyana...But never fear, I have two more names for you and, although I am not sure of their mortal status, they will always be heroes in my book.

(1) The Reverend John Dorman, MS, an Anglican priest who dedicated his life in Christian service to those who got the least attention from officialdom. He crossed waterfalls, blistering savannahs, and negotiated obstacle-strewn and virtually impassable mountain paths in order to serve the peoples of the Upper Mazaruni and Upper Cuyuni Region. And he did so always with a permanent smile on his face and a jovial: "Well, hello, how are you?" to all he encountered in passing.

John Dorman was a United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) English missionary priest in the interior of Guyana for 38 years (1957-95). He was professed in the Third Order while Kale King was Provincial Guardian (November 18, 1980), and Dorman died on July 18, 1998. The Rev. John F. Twisleton (Chichester Diocesan Mission & Renewal Adviser, formerly Principal of the Alan Knight Training Centre and Council member of Guyana Diocesan Association) reviewed the biography of Dorman, *Old-Style Missionary: The Ministry of John Dorman, Priest in Guyana* (Derek Goodrich, Taverner Publications 2003—in our Online library). Twisleton's review is a very good summary of Dorman's heroic work:

The word 'missionary' is an uncomfortable word in a world so aware of the variety of cultures and religions. We doubt the unique claims of religion. We question whether human well being is advanced by religion. We are particularly uncomfortable with the British colonial legacy and its associated commendation of Christianity.

Derek Goodrich and John Dorman are part of the rich legacy of service the Church of England has provided for the Diocese of Guyana. In *Old-Style Missionary* the former salutes the latter in a well produced book depicting a life of missionary service set within Guyana's indigenous Amerindian community. The 124 pages with 30 illustrations and fascinating stories of life in Guyana's hinterland are valuable simply for being a rare record of the culture of the forest people in a time of tumultuous change. Beyond that, they capture the heart of a missionary whose conviction about Christ led him to build and not tear down, to serve and not to be served. In that sense this book is a powerful counterbalance to the negative overtones of the word 'missionary' in today's world.

John Dorman first went to then British Guiana in 1957 and served there almost continuously up to his death in 1998. Like many expatriates he redeemed his spare time in correspondence. Canon Dorman's letters have made Fr. Goodrich's task all the easier. They have also been a rich source of encouragement, challenge and guidance to many over the years. As my own reflection makes clear at the end of the book, I am one who would never have come to visit Guyana had not a letter arrived one day in his familiar, closely woven script. Writing in 1986, John asked me to prayerfully consider joining the Company of Mission Priests team in that land to serve the training of Amerindian priests. I could not find an excuse; such was the spiritual force of John Dorman on occasion!

The need for indigenous priests is demonstrated by one of John's tours of the Rupununi region, before we ran the Alan Knight Training Centre, when he baptised more than 100 children, gave Holy Communion to over 1000 and heard nearly 100 Confessions. It was primarily through John's initiative that the Amerindian communities today have almost 20 priests so that the sacraments are now available to all Guyanese, even those in the remotest parts of the rainforest.

Old-Style Missionary makes riveting reading. It begins with a shipwreck on the Essequibo in which John nearly loses his life on his way to take a Boxing Day Mass. He swims in the dark to safety on Calf Island where he says a Magnificat in thanksgiving. Writing from his hammock in the vestry at Kurupung, he speaks of the "paint on the walls still scarred by the blood the vampire bats have sampled from my great toes." Derek Goodrich describes how John was driven from the Mission one night by a pack of jaguars and on another occasion was arrested by the Venezuelan frontier guards on the pretext of teaching without authority on their soil, a trumped up charge fortunately soon withdrawn.

The missionary priest spends himself in much itinerant ministry: "Towards evening he would reach a Mission for Evensong, Confessions, Confirmation class, then sleep in a hammock, with Mass in the early morning. The work was endlessly varied in pattern and human need. It is concerned with carrying the simple riches of divine love to the simple poor people who need Him," John writes. "Could there be anything more at one with the work of the Gospel than a little boat full of silent and reverent people returning from their Communion, the priest barefoot in alb and stole sitting in the bow and carrying the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament for some faithful sufferer to whom the Lord travels as on the Sea of Galilee?"

Fr. Goodrich describes John's advocacy for Guyana's Amerindians who are faced with the challenge of integration with Guyanese society as a whole. Mining and logging ventures that damage their livelihood challenge them. The pollution of the rivers by dredging for gold remains a very serious problem. Fr. Dorman writes of how the Amerindians "at every point...live in two worlds, and more and more these two worlds are coming into collision with their own ancient way taking most of the knocks." When I used to visit him in Kamarang he was always deeply concerned about the heavy drinking and the video shops opened

for the mining fraternity and their effect on the indigenous people. The formerly tranquil community had more of the feel of the Wild West with young people being drawn into prostitution.

Between 1975 and 1983 Canon Dorman was involved in a successful international campaign against a major hydroelectric project that would have flooded the Akawaio homelands, including the sacred centre of the Alleluia Church. His refusal to condemn the Alleluia Church, which holds many elements of Christian tradition (but with no bible or Eucharist) contrasted with the negative attitude of other Christian churches. John succeeded in obtaining associate membership of the Guyana Council of Churches for Alleluia and encouraged his priests and people to hold joint membership. His largest church at Jawalla was built especially to accommodate the traditional Alleluia dance, which would accompany or follow the Eucharist on great feast days.

Fr. Allan Buik's funeral homily is quoted: "True to the best traditions of catholic Anglicanism, both in theory and in practice, he stressed the Creation and the Incarnation as well as the Atonement. His cherishing of God's creation and of the tribes among whom he lived earned him high respect from environmentalists and anthropologists as well as from Christians—Alleluia as well as Anglican... His devotion to his Amerindians could be paternalistic... (his) foibles were all facets of his love for the people to whom God had sent him, the people for whom he never stopped caring."

All through *Old-Style Missionary* there is witness to the infectious enthusiasm of its subject who drew out so many vocations to the praise and service of God including my own offering of missionary service. The quiet humility of John Dorman is echoed in the style of Fr. Goodrich which is unobtrusive, presenting material assiduously researched in a way that honours both his subject, their common Lord and their 'dear land of Guyana'

John Dorman's Guyana

Religious accommodation finally became mutual: the Anglicans made a partial rapprochement with the Alleluia Church. Largely owing to the recommendation of a British Anglican priest based permanently in the Upper Mazaruni, Father John Dorman, the Anglican Church held an inquiry on the subject of Alleluia theology (Father Charles Roland TSSF, personal communication). Father Dorman traveled to Amokokupai to discuss the matter with Aibil-ibin, and the Anglicans' central concerns (whether the referent of Alleluia's "Jesus Christ" was in fact the Christian deity and the inclusion of a concept of trinity) were answered to the church's satisfaction in the affirmative. This inquiry was instrumental in the inclusion of the Alleluia religion in the Guyana Council of Churches.

Susan Staats, "Fighting in a Different Way: Indigenous Resistance through the Alleluia Religion of Guyana," In *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996, p. 172.

The following is a short piece written by Dorman that captures his sense of the presence of God even in the most trying of circumstances.

"A View from the Lock-Up" (*El-Dorado*, magazine of the Guyana Diocesan Association, UK, 1972)

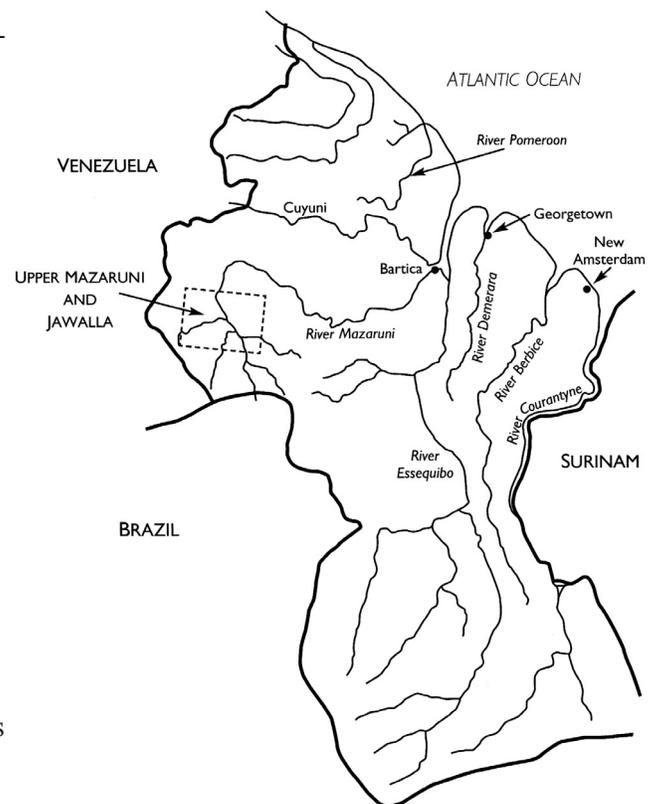
Dear Editor of *El-Dorado*, you gave me the task of writing about the church and work in our newest parish, Kamarang. It is the setting of an adventure of primary evangelism, in what is now our country's loneliest corner. I planned to write a prosaic factual account of the Cuyuni missions.

It would not do. This river is the real road, I think, to El-Dorado: yes, literally and spiritually.

Literally, its rock-strewn torrents pour between untouched gold-bearing hills, fed by sparkling brown-tinged streams where little nuggets and shining dust may still be found in the pools by the fortunate few. When you have travelled by engine-boat at least a week upstream from Bartica, you pass from Guyana into the "Spanish Main," and reach, one day beyond, the Cuyani's largest village, called El-Dorado.

Spiritually too: here they survive, few and almost untouched by the clawing paws of acquisitive "civilization," the calm, wise, gentle Amerindian people, to whom God has given the tropical forest as their teacher. They have learned their lessons there for unnumbered centuries, and theirs is the priceless treasure of a way of life so good that any visitor, not blinded by vanity, would want to walk himself among them to listen and learn its secrets. In tiny villages of

A MAP OF GUYANA SHOWING THE SITUATION OF BARTICA AND JAWALLA



Caribe people, poor as the poorest you dreamt of, yet their humanity glittering with the simple secrets that the great world has lost, the real “Golden Man” stands to meet the Church of God, and learn what more God has to give.

We cannot write that story yet. El-Dorado’s river welcomed the Church only six years ago, but the doors seem to be closing, closing against the world (which will batter its way in). The area becomes yearly more inaccessible and the little riverside villages are scarcely half as populated as they were when we came. Geography, economics, history are ready to say, “There is no El-Dorado—it was a dream.”

Mr. Editor, I arrived here at the river by plane, hoping to write you “the usual article” on the spot. However, the same evening, following a little military mistake (for which most ample regrets have been offered and accepted), I found myself in detention across the frontier, and what follows was written there.

Ambassador in bonds? Scarcely that: just another priest held prisoner on duty, to add to the hundreds or thousands elsewhere tonight in the same position.

Curious how patterns persist from Apostolic times. The circumstances, the pretexts, are often irrelevant to the errand, which is interrupted. But interrupted it is, though, as St Paul found, “the word of God is not bound.” It never is.

The soldier with his gun across his knees, who watches us through the open door tonight, while the noise of the barracks on a Saturday night makes sleep impossible, unknowingly speaks to me as plainly as the soldier to whom the Apostle was chained at Rome. His dull green uniform helps him remember he is only one of an army, serving a cause. One soldier in uniform is the army on guard. At the same time, his uniform helps each and all to blend into the forest setting of their service, so well that, with some simple skill, they can almost vanish from the scene.

I find this an interesting hint to the Church in Guyana, indeed everywhere. The common “uniform” of being disciples, which enables us to recognize each other—isn’t it Christ’s holy sign of the Cross, carried by us all with gladness as well as tears? This “uniform” is somehow the key to the Church’s unnoticed silent power in the world, the hidden yeast at work. Remember Kurutuku down the river, loneliest village I know; I can see Edwin the catechist and Dunstan the school-master asleep in their flimsy homes, among Christ’s beloved poor. Five years they’ve been there, two or three months’ mail-time from their own villages; just a hammock, a table, two stools, some books, the roughest meals over a wood fire, a smile for everyone, and duty done as God offers daily opportunity. They’re in the uniform of the Christian army, yet invisible to the world, unvisited, upraised, unprompted. This is the miracle of camouflage that the Church is using, to be everywhere, actively fighting evil, as an integrated worldwide force, yet invisible to the dictator who would crush it, or the vested interests who might try to harness it for the enslavement of men born to be free. I pray for the Church in Guyana, uniformed with the Cross.

As I look at this soldier again, just a few feet away, his uniform is somehow concentrated in his belt. Without it he would be an untidy, unprepared, uncouth figure. But belted, he is alert, proud, and ready for anything. The shining buckle is his pride, and the strong webbing gives him a real integration of purpose in his soldiering.

What is our belt, our golden girdle? A year ago when I was here in the Cuyuni, I had Winston [Williams] with me, a young Akawaio tribesman who, alone and unaided, persuaded the Guyana Youth Corps to release him from that training, so that he may fulfill the higher claims of God calling him to train for full-time Christian work. He came with me across the high savannahs and through the streaming forest valleys, northwards to a strange area, to serve as an evangelist on the very same island I was arrested on this afternoon. After that long three days’ journey, I had only one night to introduce him to his little flock—“This is my young brother, Winston, who will stay to help you come nearer to God”—and the next day after an early Mass, we waved goodbye, leaving him on the rocky beach with the tall trees behind him, as upright and strong as himself. He is belted with the fact of vocation; the certainty of divine commission; apostleship, if one dare claim that word for each such Christian, as well as for us all. How hopeless it would be if we left that behind.

I look down at the soldier’s boots. They must be costly, for the soft pliant leather is laced tightly half-way to the knee, against the hazards of jungle journeys, and yet they are smart enough, with their daily shine-up for the Presidential Guard on parade. St Paul’s phrase gives the clue—“Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Two months ago a young man I knew well was travelling, as his ancestors had done for centuries, from one side of this broad river to the other, from one country across the international water to the other. It was early morning, just dawn.

A rifle shot rang out, and he fell dead from the canoe into the water, shot through the mouth. Such unexplained

violence in a military zone has a terrible power to scatter an innocent population, whose forebears lived indifferently on one side, farmed on the other and fished between. But Peter, the fine old man who with his own hands built the beautiful church of St Faith, at Awatapati (two years' work for the glory of God) would not remove from the scene of the crime. The priest would be coming soon; the people must be here to worship with him. God would take care of them. Those who believe that Christ sends his Easter gifts of peace to the hearts of men must also pay the price to win peace in their homes, to cement peace among the nations.

I smile at the soldier in the lamplight, as I sit writing on the edge of the bed and the tense face relaxes into an answering smile. I bless him with the sign of the Cross, and after a moment of perplexity he understands and makes the holy sign himself.

It is night, and, though he is on duty, he has left his cap behind, till he needs it for tomorrow's burning sun. I am glad he has put it aside, for it lets me see him as a man, a brother man, his black lustrous hair somehow placing him not as a soldier, but in that category of which God our Father knows each one by name; just as in some Venezuelan village, perhaps overlooking the shining blue Caribbean as it sweeps west to Panama, his mother would not pick him out easily when the soldier boys come home on leave, marching in battalion pride to the little plaza—until they lift their caps to cheer. Then she can see him at once as her son.

I remember how many hundreds I have been allowed to baptize in this river since 1966: perhaps I could identify the adults by name, but the children, who nestled in my arm and smiled as the cool water flowed over their foreheads, I would soon be stumped for their names if they came in through that open door one by one. But the Church would not, because God could never forget, as a mother may, at times, even wish to forget.

There are many "caps" that are put on people in Guyana: racial prejudice, social stigma, economic injustice, divisions of inherited culture, home languages not shared, etc. But in the Church you come bareheaded, and each is seen as one to whom God says, "I have called you by your name, you are Mine."

I have still to think about his gun. This is a horror of which I have no expert knowledge. I could not name its parts, nor even explain their uses. Only I know it is made to kill. It is the symbol of fear, of human disunity. Yet one supposes he is proud of it, because it marks him out in the nation, as one who has been trusted with the arbitrament of life and death. In the last resort, life and death are his business.

Perhaps we may say that Satan gives him this ghastly duty, but that God allows him to bear it; just as Our Lord carried the ghastly Cross, the challenge was what to do with it, and He answered by transforming it into a means of life from death.

In a few years—who knows?—the Church in the Cuyuni may be dead. A village is uprooted by remote decree: a sect sweeps in to an illiterate people and with "high-powered preaching" overwhelms with arguments that they cannot read; a new industry is opened and a thousand years of hunting, fishing and farming go by the board. Whatever may come, we live and would die in the cause of Life: in little groups, men, women and children stand up to be counted for Him who is the real Life, along these lovely river banks and in the little islands among the jagged rocks.

What looks like doom is a challenge to jump up and face the darkness, for there is the true light beyond. It is now past midnight and the dawn will come: for you, Dunstan, Edwin, Winston, Peter, old Hannah with the patient smile, little Veronica with the face of the Madonna, all of you.

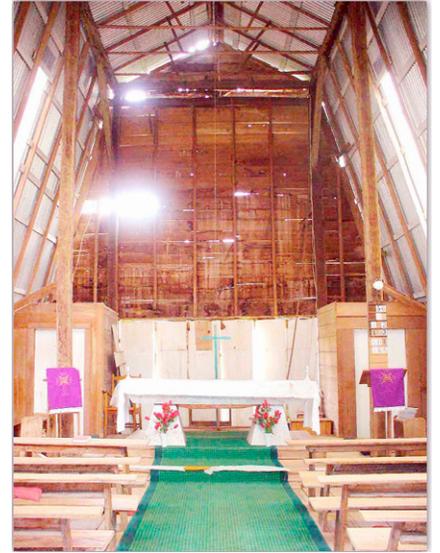
God bless you through the night till then.



John Dorman at left along with friends at Kamarang



St. Francis de Sales Church in Kamarang — construction was completed in 14 working days in July 1969 with the assistance of 30 youth volunteers from Guyana, Bermuda, Georgia, and Maine during an International Student Work Tour. John's ashes are buried in the church's graveyard. (Stabroek News, July 30, 2009)



Archbishop Runcie and John Dorman at Alan Knight Training Centre