The Schneiders settle in America

My grandfather, Frederick Schneider, came to America at age 12. He was the youngest in the family. His father sent him to live with cousins in Iowa, because Bismarck was persecuting Catholics in Germany. He went to New York, took a train to Iowa, and worked on a farm in Muscatine, on the Mississippi River.

He didn't like farming. When he was seventeen or eighteen, he left, and headed east, a drifter. He got as far as Sandusky, Ohio, where he went to work in quarry, probably for Ohio limestone. There he learned tools, sharpening tools and making tools. He learned how to melt an old chisel, re-pound it, and put an edge on it. From there he became a blacksmith, making metal parts at the hot forge. He got word that Columbus Buggy Parts Co. was hiring, so he took a train down to Columbus and got a job fashioning the parts for horse-drawn carriages.

In Columbus he met and married a woman named Mary Kaiser. Then he fell ill with tuberculosis. My father, Philip Schneider, was born in 1880. He remembered when he was just a boy that his father was always sick. He was a strict man, but very happy to be in America. One day he found my father in the kitchen talking to his mother in German. My grandfather didn't like it. He said, "We are American citizens. We are not speaking German and I do not want my son, or any of my children learning a word of German." He took my father out of the German school and sent him to school at Sacred Heart parish in Columbus. There my father met Duke and Joe O'Shaughnessy. He was to marry their sister Nora some years later.

My father ran with some tough Irish kids at Sacred Heart. One night he snuck out of the house after dinner and went out with some of these kids. They broke into a factory and vandalized it. One of the guys took a razor and cut up one of the leather belts that ran the drill presses. He cut it into pieces and made leather belts for everybody. A couple of days later his father noticed the belt and asked him where it came from. My father confessed. His father made him take the belt back to the factory manager and suffer the consequences. Fortunately, he didn't press any charges.

The Telegram

My father left school in the fifth grade to go to work because his father's TB made it impossible for him to continue to work as a blacksmith. He got his first job delivering telegrams for Western Union. He'd bring home two dollars a week. He was paid on Friday and grandma would go out at eight o'clock at night and buy the groceries for the whole week for $2 – this for a family of five.

One day my father was given a telegram for Mr. Joyce, president of the Green Joyce Dry Goods company. He was told not to deliver it to anyone but Mr. Joyce. So he went to the office with his telegram for Mr. Joyce. The secretary said that he wasn't available and that he should leave it with her. My father insisted, "I must give the telegram to Mr. Joyce and no one else. I'll wait."

Finally after an hour or so, Joyce arrived and heard the story of the messenger who waited to give him the telegram. He called my father in.

"Sonny, my secretary tells me you waited over an hour to deliver this telegram. Why did you do that?"

"Sir, I do what I'm told," my father said. "I was told this was to be delivered to you and no one else, and I was prepared to stay all day."

"Sonny, how would you like working for me? You're the kind of person I'd like to hire."

My father took the job and doubled his salary to $4 a week. He started sweeping floors. Then he stocked shelves and kept inventory. Then he became a salesman. Green Joyce was a clothing and notions wholesaler. He would sell hats, overshoes, coats, gloves, and other ready-to-wear clothing, plus buttons, ribbons, cloth, and everything else people needed to make their own clothes. He criss-crossed Southern Ohio on the train, carrying his sample case, visiting all his accounts. He would watch the weather. He'd

tell his stores when a bad winter was coming, and advise them to stock up on cold-weather gear. He was very good at this.

Finally he became president of the company. From janitor to president – a American story. Then, in 1928, Mr. Joyce died and his heirs decided to liquidate the company. People weren't making their own clothes as much anymore, and Green Joyce couldn't compete in the ready-to-wear market. My father was 47 years old. He had eight children.

A breakdown – and a check

After my father was laid off, his whole world fell apart. My sister Jean was born just as Green Joyce was liquidating and my father was laid off. He said his mother had told him, about children coming, that "God never creates a rabbit that he doesn't create a blade of grass for the rabbit to eat." And for my father another promotion came every time there was another child. But now a baby was coming home from the hospital and he had no work. He couldn't believe that something like that could happen. He just fell apart. He had terrible pains in his leg – real pains. He would get around with a cane. I can remember, time after time, the cart coming up to pick him up, to have x-rays. And here he was only in his late 40s.

My mother's income tided us over. Before mother married, in the presence of dad, her father gave her two thousand dollars, cash. He says, "This is for you. This is not for this Dutchman here. I want this known and I'm a witness to it. This is yours and he is to have absolutely nothing to say about how you use that money. If you spend it, or invest it, you do what you want. He has no right to tell you anything." When the war came, my mother put the money in Liberty Bonds. Interest would come in, not very much, but some.

Before World War I, before I was born, my father's younger brother Frank, who was a wheeler and dealer in Washington, came across two Englishmen who wanted to

start a household finance corporation in the United States. They were selling franchises, and the Ohio franchise was open. Because Frank was from Ohio, they offered him the franchise if he could come up with a hundred thousand dollars in stock in this corporation. Frank told Phil about it, and my father lined up a bunch of his friends to buy shares.

Dad was telling mother one day about this all these friends, and she says, "How 'bout me? You never asked me." He says, "I promised your father I never would give you advice about how to spend your money. You'll have to get your own advice." So my mother asked her brother, Duke, who asked his banker friends about the Household Finance deal, and they all said it sounded great. So my mother sold the war bonds and put everything she had into HFC. That was probably around 1923.

About 1931, I was still in grammar school, and dad was shaky, trying to get on his feet. The HFC check came in, and I was allowed to take the check down to the bank and deposit it. That's the first time I ever had a check for $150. $150!

Heading East

Eventually my father got himself back together. Uncle Joe O'Shaughnessy got him a job at U.S. Rubber Company, where he was a vice president. Before that my father had been turned down for a job at Sears because he was too old; they wanted people to work at least 20 years before mandatory retirement at age 65. Uncle Joe was furious. "Lie about your age, Phil," he said. "They never check." So when he filled out the application for U.S. Rubber, he put down his age as 45. He got the job.

His first job was studying U.S. Rubber's tire operation in Detroit. He lived in Detroit and came home on weekends. He knew absolutely nothing about the making of tires, but he knew about inventory. He knew that you had to turn over your inventory as

fast as you could to make money, and he was shocked by U.S. Rubber's tire inventory. Too many different tires. Too many styles. The warehouses were full, and there were few customers. This was the depression.

He slashed production, cut out whole lines of tires, and got the inventory down. He did the same thing for belts, tools, and the other products that U.S. Rubber made. A lot of people lost their jobs because of his work. But he said, "You're making this stuff we're not selling, why should we be making it?" - Hard to argue with that.

In 1931 the company moved him to Passaic, New Jersey where he worked for a few years until the company moved him to its headquarters in Rockefeller Center in New York. The family moved to New Jersey, and he worked in Passaic and in New York until he retired at age 67 in 1943.

From Horses to Funerals to the Dam

The first O'Shaughnessy, Jerry, came to America from Ireland around the time of the potato famine in about 1848 or 1850. His first job was working with relatives on the Eire Canal. Then he went to work on the railroad as they laid tracks to the west. He settled for a time in Crestline, Ohio, a big junction where the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central tracks crossed over. There was a lot of employment there.

My grandfather, Jerry, was born in Crestline in 1853. The family moved on to Columbus. Grandpa O'Shaughnessy married a woman named Ann Donovan. Ann Donovan, I think, was one of thirteen children. The family was wiped out by tuberculosis. Ann was one of two who survived. He married Ann, and they lived on Neil Ave. in Columbus in a tiny house. My mother, Nora, was born in 1883. She had

two older brothers, Jerry and Joe, and a younger sister, Nel. The younger Jerry was called “Duke,” to distinguish him from his father, I imagine.

Grandpa O’Shaughnessy made his living running a livery stable. He rented horses, and carriages. He discovered that funerals were big business for livery stables because people wanted big, expensive carriages for funerals, so he expanded into the undertaking business. He didn’t know anything about funeral direction or embalming, but he knew business, and he made a viable business out of it.

Grandpa O’Shaughnessy was an energetic man. He found people to manage the livery stable and undertaking businesses, and went to work for the water department of the city of Columbus. He worked himself right up, and eventually became superintendent of the waterworks. He saw that Columbus was going to be a big city some day, and would need an ample water supply. So he proposed building a new dam, and he battled the City Council over it. He would show that people were dying from typhoid fever, that well water was being contaminated by outhouses. He died in 1921, but the dam was built. It was dedicated in 1926, and it was named the O’Shaughnessy Dam. Young Jerry O’Shaughnessy and my sister, Ann, were the ones that pulled the string on the big bottle of water to have the dam dedicated. I was there. I was nine years old.

Not a nice thing to say

Duke and Joe O’Shaughnessy knew my father, Phil Schneider, all the way through school. That’s how my father met my mother. He must have known my mother from the time that she was in grammar school. It was quite unusual because the Germans and the Irish didn’t like each other and didn’t associate with each other. Even though they were friends, there was tension. My grandpa O’Shaughnessy always called my

father the Dutchman and his son Duke always called him the Dutchman too. It was not a nice thing to say. It was like calling an Irishman a Mick. Funny, but sort of not funny.

And there were real differences. My father was very frugal. I think dad had the first penny he ever earned. And, of course, Dutchmen aren't Germans. Dutchmen are legendary for their frugality. The O'Shaughnessys were not frugal at all. I remember Uncle Duke smoking English Oval cigarettes – expensive smokes. He appeared to be prosperous, but I think he lived pretty close to the edge. He took over the funeral business from his father, and anybody that didn't have any money in Columbus always got buried from O'Shaughnessy's.

II

A Movie in Third Grade

The first thought I ever had about the foreign missions was when I was in the third grade at Holy Name School in Columbus, Ohio. A priest came in and showed us a movie of missionaries in China. We watched this guy in all his priestly clothes walking along in a rice paddy. He had a big hat on, and he was surrounded by people planting rice in the rain. All I could think of was, after I saw that movie, "the one place in the world I'd never, never want to go is China or any part of the Orient." The heat, the dirt, the poverty – it repelled me.

Later that changed. I had thoughts of priesthood. I didn't want to be a diocesan priest. When I was a senior at Fordham, I went to a Catholic Students Mission Crusade

in New York where I heard a priest speak about the missions. He mentioned China. In the spring of my senior year I started looking for a job. I knew accounting, and I read this ad in the New York Times, "Looking for accountants to work for Mobil Oil in Shanghai. Interviews." That intrigued me. I remembered the priest talking about China at the Mission Crusade. I thought that China would be an exciting place to go. I had my interview. Finally, the Mobil recruiter said, "Listen, you're a young fellow. Why do you want to go to China? You'll be terribly lonely over there. With the ability you have, you don't have to go there." I said, "But I think I could help those poor people. And the very fact that I'd be working for Mobil Oil, I could be getting their kerosene for their lights. I could be helpful to them." And the recruiter said, "Maybe you ought to be thinking of being a priest in the foreign missions."

I felt crushed. But I also felt that he might be right. I talked to my spiritual director about it. He sent me to see the Jesuit Provincial. He told me that the Jesuits didn't have any missions in China. Maybe I could go to the Philippines as a Jesuit, he said, but if I wanted go to China, I should go talk to Maryknoll.

So I went up to Maryknoll without an appointment. I took the train to Ossining. I didn't have a quarter to take the taxi from the train station, but I did have a nickel for the bus. I got to see Fr. Drought, the Vicar General. He talked with me outside; I still remember the exact spot where we talked. He sent me to a priest in charge of vocations. We talked. Then he introduced me to Bishop James Edward Walsh, the superior general himself. Everybody made me feel welcome. They invited me back for a weekend.

I spent a weekend with the seminarians and really enjoyed it. The rest followed quickly. I decided to apply. They sent me an application. I filled it out, sent it in, and was accepted by the time I graduated from Fordham.

Breaking the News

I told my mother about it in the back yard of our home. She was hanging clothes. I told her I was thinking of becoming a priest. In fact, I wanted to be a Maryknoll priest and go to China. She kept hanging clothes on the line as I talked. I finished. She kept working until all the clothes were hung on the line. Finally she said, "Dan, your father and I would be very pleased if you became a priest. I want you to remember, and don't you ever forget it, if you go away to Maryknoll and you don't like it, this is your home. If you go to China and become a priest and you don't like it, you don't want to remain a priest, this is your home." And I never forgot it. It was a tremendous release because in those days anyone who left the priesthood was disgraced. He was called a Judas.

My father was outwardly supportive. Years later, when we were able to talk freely together, he told me that my decision was the greatest disappointment he ever had. He and my mother were passionate about giving their children an education. My father always felt the sting of not having an education. He had something special planned for me, the son who was getting a business degree. He had some influential friends who had pulled some strings and gotten me accepted at the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania for an MBA program. They'd lined up a scholarship for me. This was going to be my graduation present.

He said, "When you told me about Maryknoll, it crushed me. I thought that going to China was the dumbest thing I ever thought of." He told me this years later. Outwardly he supported my decision. And later he was genuinely happy at my ordination, and proud of the work I did in the order. But it was a different story when he first heard the news.

Everyone in the family supported me with the possible exception of Uncle Duke, my mother's brother. He made a joke of it, "'May Poles,' what in the world is the 'May Poles?' he said. Why the heck wouldn't you join the Dominicans? They're somebody. But the May Poles is nobody." But I think he was pleased too. (He was partial to the Dominicans. His son, Bill, became a Dominican priest.)

My mother was the happiest of all. She always wanted one of her sons to be priest. She probably wouldn't have minded if all her sons became priests. The sad thing is that she didn't live to see it. She died in October, 1943. I was ordained in June, 1945.

Taking orders in the seminary

Seminary life was very strict. There were many rules, and you learned to follow them without thinking. I encountered my first strange rule as soon as I was accepted into the order. They told me I had to take philosophy all over, even though I had a major in philosophy from Fordham, because the Holy See required priests to have their philosophy in Latin. Mine was in English. So I spent a year at the apostolic college at Venard sitting in philosophy classes taught in Latin. They never gave me any mark, had no record except I was just putting in my time.

At the novitiate (called officially the Probatorium) in Bedford, Massachusetts, they made you memorize portions of the gospel of St. Luke and then get up in front of the class every Sunday morning and recite them. I don't think I read Luke for five years afterward because it was so unpleasant for me to think about all that work memorizing and the embarrassment when my memory failed me. Another novice and I didn't know anything about cars. So the novice master told us to completely disassemble a car engine, clean the parts, and put it back together. When we got it all back together, we turned the key and of course it wouldn't start.

In the seminary there was great fear of heresy. The professors were under surveillance. They could be kicked out of teaching if they said the wrong thing. We memorized everything in theology. I graduated from seminary not knowing anything about how to write a homily. And I had to sign the oath against Modernism in order to be ordained. This said, among other things, that the world was created four thousand years ago. I tell young people today about that and they say, "That's crazy. You're only sixty years a priest, but you talk like it was three hundred years ago."

The Man who saved my vocation

In winter, 1943, I was approaching my final vows and I was pretty much disgusted. The seminary experience was awful. I didn't think I was learning anything in my classes. It was a tightly regimented system. We had started off in our novitiate with about thirty-seven men. About twenty had left in a two-year period. They went to join the armed forces, but there was more to it than that. Guys felt they were spinning their wheels. So did I.

One night in January or February, a priest came up to my door, made himself right at home, sat down, and says, "How are things going?" I had never met him before. He introduced himself as John Martin

"So, how are things going, Dan?" he said.

"Terrible," I said.

To my surprise, he agreed, "This is a god-awful place."

I elaborated. "They keep after you. They say 'show some initiative'. The minute you show some initiative, they complain that you're stepping out of line. So you pull back, and they say 'you don't do anything. Are you having a difficulty asserting yourself?' It doesn't make any sense. The classes are terrible. We're not learning anything. I'm finishing my third year in theology and I don't know any more than I knew in religion in my first year of high school. There's nothing creative about the classes…I'm pretty well fed up. Besides, my mother died a few months ago and I have four brothers in the service. I'm thinking about joining them."

Father Martin heard me out. Then he told me that he had the very same feelings when he went through seminary years before, after he had served in the Navy in World War I. But he was convinced that things were going to change. "You want to be around for that," he said. "You need to learn the art of making things change."

That visit made all the difference to me. Looking back on it, it's hard to understand why. Things hadn't changed at Maryknoll in the many years since Martin has been in the seminary, and this was twenty years before the Vatican Council, but somehow John Martin gave me the encouragement I needed to go on and get ordained.

John Martin remained a good friend. Things changed in Maryknoll, just as he said they would, but he wasn't altogether happy about it. The last time I saw him was in about 1970. He had had a stroke, and was living in the retirement home. He was just melancholy over the terrible way the Church was going, how Maryknoll had all these lay missionaries now, and they're not putting the emphasis on priests. He was old Church. It made me very sad.

Cigarettes and French Theology

I began to experience the first stirring of changes in the Church in the late 1940s. I had been ordained, and I was working at the Maryknoll headquarters. I had a room in the seminary that was separated from the others, and the seminarians took to visiting me. I let them smoke. You weren't supposed to smoke on the property, but the idea was they would say they came to me for spiritual direction, and the spiritual director could let them smoke if things got tense.

And I said, "Listen you guys, it's okay, you can come, I welcome you. But I just can't sit here and talk nonsense. You know theology. I want to know what you're studying, and I want to study what you're studying."

"How were you in French?"

"I studied a lot of French, I said."

"Well, you know, all the good theology is all in French, it's not in English."

"Why not?"

"Bishops don't want it done in English. So we have to do it in French."

So they got me reading De Lubac and Danielou and the other French theologians who were far ahead of their time. I began to get an idea that John Martin's dream is coming true, that seminary is going to change. But what happened was that in my head I was all prepared for change. Emotionally I wasn't, because everything that held me together in the Church was strict discipline. We don't need you to think at all, they said.

One story from my seminary days. I was doing an exam on Church history. An essay question asked for a thousand words on the reasons for the first crusade. I'd been reading. I learned absolutely nothing about church history in class, but I read on the side. So I said that the reason for the first crusade is that the Pope was struggling with the kings for power, and he wanted a rallying point. So he launched a Crusade to kill Muslims, saying you could get to heaven by killing Muslims. It was very popular.

After dinner one day, my Church History professor calls me over. He's got the paper there in his hand, he says, "What's this about the crusades? Where'd you get all this stuff about the Popes? I didn't teach that in class." I told him I'd been reading. He scowled at me and told me I'd passed. But when I asked for the paper back he refused. "No," he said. "The paper goes in the files."

Learning about the Missions

In the seminary we heard about the missions all the time. At meals we listened to readings of the diaries of missionaries. We were constantly hearing about the various things the priests were doing overseas to make converts. Our basic orientation was, "Get over there, and no matter what you do, get people baptized. If they don't get baptized and they die, they're going to hell." Converts had to memorize a catechism. We used a

Korean translation of what we called the Shanghai Catechism, which was very much like the Baltimore Catechism. We used it for years. After people memorized it, we baptized them. Then we urged them go out and bring their friends and family members into the Catholic community.

Maryknoll's work in those years was directed to the Orient. The missions were in China, Japan, and Korea. We worked in Hawaii too, although it was a U.S. territory, because so many Chinese and Japanese lived there.

Pearl Harbor and World War II caused a huge upheaval in Maryknoll. The Asian missions were closed to us. So the Holy Father asked us to work in South America. While I was in the seminary we opened missions in Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico. All the seminarians had been studying Chinese – two hours a week of written Chinese and daily practice at speaking Mandarin. With Pearl Harbor, we dropped Chinese and replaced it with Spanish.

The shift to Latin America caused a shift in Maryknoll's thinking about its mission. The official line was, "this is fine, we'll go where the Holy Father asks us to go, thank God there's a place where we're needed." But there was grumbling, and some discomfort. The original idea of Maryknoll was to convert non-Christians, build up the local church, and eventually turn it over to the local clergy. But in Latin America we were dealing with baptized people in Catholic countries where local clergy was already in place. With Latin America, Maryknoll's mission broadened.

The mission has broadened still more in the last 40 years. But when I went out to Korea, I still had the old idea of mission. I thought that if those people didn't get baptized, they were going to hell.

Working in the Office

I joined an order of missionary priests, but my first assignment was to work at Maryknoll headquarters. I stayed there for ten years. I had no regrets about staying in the U.S. It was important work and it had to be done. My attitude was, "I'll do what my superiors tell me to do."

I was thrown into office management, something I had never done. I learned about publishing *Maryknoll* magazine – from the time someone sends a card asking for the magazine, through writing, editing, printing, and mailing it. I was put in charge of Graphotype Department – something I knew absolutely nothing about – so the brother who ran the department could go on in his Novitiate training. The next year I took over the department where the magazines were addressed so that another brother could go to Guatemala. I was assigned to purchasing next; the priest in charge of purchasing went to China. I released another priest when I took over the filing department. So I released two brothers and two priests to go to the missions.

Missionary Spirit vs. the Intellectuals

Being assigned to the office in a missionary order was a delicate matter. I learned that you had to say the right things about how you felt about it. Most priests who were assigned to jobs at Maryknoll were constantly asking to go to the missions. I didn't do that. When I was asked, "Would you accept a mission assignment if it was given to you?" I said, "Gladly." When I was asked, "Do you want to go to the missions?" I said, "Yes, I want to go to the missions. But I want to work here too. I want to do what the society wants me to do."

One day, Father Al Nevins, the editor of *Maryknoll* magazine, told me that I wasn't answering those questions right. He said, "They think you want to go to the missions." And I said, "Of course I do. You do too, Al." "Sure, but I'm not asking for it." "But I'm not asking for it either." "Well, that's how it's being interpreted. You want to go to the missions."

Al said that the correct answer to the question, “do you want to go to the missions?” was not “Yes, but I want to do what my superiors want me to do,” but rather “I’ll go to the missions if my superiors want me to do it, but what I want to do is the best possible job I can do here.”

The whole thing confused me. I eventually realized that there were disagreements within the Society about this issue. On the one hand were those who insisted on an unqualified missionary orientation for all members of the society. When Bishop Lane was Superior-General he gave talk in which he said “If there’s anybody in the society who does not want to go to the missions, they don’t belong here.” He thought that everyone must always express a desire to go to the missions.

On the other hand were those who thought the Society must have some permanent people in the United States, professionally trained for demanding jobs. They were called “the intellectuals” because the argument focused on the need for a seminary faculty. They said that the Society had to send some men for doctorates and assign them permanently to teaching. That’s basically what happened. We developed a faculty. And some priests with special skills never went to the missions. Al Nevins never went to the missions. Several other gifted priests like John Considine and Charley McCarthy, my boss, never went to the missions.

But there was tension over this, especially in the 40s and 50s. Some seminary faculty stayed. Some went to the missions. Some of them taught in missionary seminaries. It’s not much of an issue now because we don’t have a seminary of our own. Seminarians go to the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago for their seminary education.

When I was a seminarian, no one ever told me that I might not go to the missions. If someone had, I would have said, “I am fully open to that because I want to serve the Society.” So in a way I guess my vocation was to the Society, and not necessarily to the missions.

Struggles at Yale

When the assignment finally came to go to Korea, I was first sent to Yale for a year to study Korean. When Fr. Booth, a man with experience in Korea, heard about that he said, they're making a mistake in sending you to Yale. You're going to have a very very difficult time. You're too old to learn a language in a classroom. You should ask to be sent directly to Korea and study right on the spot there at your own pace." And I said, "Thank you, Father, but I would never do that, I would never ask for any sort of an exception." So I did go, and I struggled tremendously at Yale. The class was small, three newly ordained priests and myself. I was almost forty. The priests moved ahead nicely. I had an awful time.

It's since been proven that age is big factor in language success. You never want to even attempt to send somebody over forty to learn an oriental language. It's too difficult. But the attitude then was that nothing is too difficult.

I think I was sent to Korea because Maryknoll needed a bishop in Korea, and they thought I might be the one. I had administrative experience. I needed mission experience, and I needed the language. It never happened. Several years later, another Maryknoll priest in Korea was made a bishop about the time I was sent back to the United States. A good thing, too. It would have been a catastrophe if I had become a bishop.

At my age I should have gone to Latin America. Language wouldn't have been an issue. I knew a good deal of Spanish. But I think I went to Korea because of the bishop idea.

III

Early days in Korea

When I returned to Korea after an absence of four years, the superior, Father Gervis Coxen, sent me to the university for language instruction. It was the Presbyterian University, which I liked very much. After the second class, they made an announcement, "on Fridays, bring your bibles, we're going to have a worship service, and everybody is expected to be at worship service." So I went back and told Jervis Coxen, "I am not going to go to the worship service because it's contrary to my beliefs, it's contrary to the instructions from Rome. We're not in any way supposed to participate in any denominational service, and so I'm going to have to withdraw from the language course." He says, "C'mon! That's old fashioned. The church is changing. Here we are, 1962, there's going to be a Vatican Council. Forget what they said in Rome." I went and I really enjoyed it. It was my first Protestant service. And I went to it every Friday for two semesters.

Then I spent almost a year going around from parish to parish, helping out so other priests could take a break. The language was very hard. I never reached a point where I could prepare a sermon. I had a tutor who helped me write the sermon, but I had to read the sermon.

In 1964 I was appointed as pastor of a church in Naisou. This was near Chongju, about a ten or fifteen minute ride in the car north up the main road. I really liked being pastor there. It was a very good, healthy environment, the people were not poor. I worked awfully hard. For about two years, I traveled by bicycle or I walked on rice paddies. Then I got a motor scooter, which helped a lot. I really enjoyed it there.

Father Eddie Richardson, a young priest, came one time and he heard me read a sermon and he said, after mass, "You read your sermon, I mean anybody could get up there and read the sermon, but why don't you get up and talk extemporaneously? You've got so much enthusiasm, it doesn't come through when you read your sermon." So I

started preaching spontaneously. I got an idea about what I want to say and I just spoke. It was much better.

What it was like in Korea

In 1956, when I went to Korea for the first time, mission work was highly organized. The French missionaries that preceded us had a system where one priest would cover an area of maybe twenty miles north and south, ten miles east and west - two thousand square miles. That would be his parish. Four times a year, he'd get on his horse and ride around the area, saying masses and baptizing converts. What held the small communities of converts together were daily prayer and an Office of the Blessed Virgin in Korean. Catholics would gather for morning and evening prayer; if you didn't show up, there had to be a good reason.

That was the system we inherited. A territory, about fifty miles from north to south, and about thirty miles from east to west, was assigned to Maryknoll in 1953. There were three or four large parishes (today there are more than forty parishes).

Tension over rice

Korea was recovering from the war. After the armistice, millions of refugees from the north came south. They'd link up with relatives already in the south and eke out some kind of existence. Many of them survived on relief goods.

The first big conflict within Maryknoll was a fight over the relief supplies. Priests controlled a lot of this relief food. The older priests would give relief goods to the

Catholics first, and only to non-Catholics if there was anything left over. They targeted people who showed some interest in becoming Catholic and gave them food. These converts became known as "rice Christians." The younger priests opposed that. When I got there, my pastor and I agreed we were going to give rice to the people who were hurting the most. We worked with government people to identify them. We got in a lot of trouble. The superior called me, he didn't call the pastor, and he said, "You shouldn't do that. You're breaking a primary rule of missionary work. We give the relief goods as a reward to the people who are Catholics."

We ignored him. We gave relief to hungry people. They were very grateful, and many of them got interested in the Church as a result of meeting us that way. We took the old idea of rewarding people for being Catholics and turned it around. We tied extra corn meal and rice to work on projects. We got people draining marshes, building dams, and digging wells. They reclaimed land and started farming it. We got involved in livestock. We had a big project, pig and cattle raising. We organized co-ops.

We changed the orientation of missionary work with these development projects. A lot of the priests thought "it's not the old fun we had of just going out there and baptizing. It's a long-term project." Maybe this had something to do with priests losing interest and leaving. It was hard work, and it really was a long-term project.

The Buddhist and the bishop

Around the time of Vatican II, I went to visit Fr. Joe Herbert, a younger Maryknoller, who had been doing some great things in his area. In particular, he had a wonderful credit union. People could come and borrow money to maybe get a cow or some tools – things that immediately improved their lives. Joe was making a lot of converts too.

One day he took me to visit one of his Buddhist friends – the first Buddhist monk I'd ever met. The guy was a college graduate; he spoke English far better than I spoke

Korean. We had a wonderful conversation. At the end, I invited him up to my parish to give a talk on Buddhism, and he accepted. I happened to mention this casually to Bishop Pardy. He was stunned. He says, "You're going to do what? You're going to bring a pagan in to talk to your Catholics? Do you realize you're going to endanger their faith? They might want to become Buddhists." He forced me to cancel the invitation, which I did very unwillingly.

That goes to show you how my thinking had already changed. The Vatican Council had not yet taught a different approach to other religions. I had been taught in the seminary that Buddhists are atheists, that Buddhism was a terrible religion, the devil's religion. They taught that in the seminary, and then I met some Buddhists and found them to be wonderful people.

Some time later a priest from the U.S. came over and gave us a retreat. He asked me to introduce him to a Buddhist monk. I took him to a monk in a hermitage nearby, a man who spoke English. I said, "This is Fr. Fraser. He teaches theology in New York in America. He has a question." "Father, what's the question?" the monk said. It is, "Are Buddhists atheists or agnostics, or do they believe in God?" The monk walked over to a dogwood tree in his garden. He put his fingers on the trunk of the beautiful tree and said, "For the Buddhists that is God."

His love of beauty moved me. But of course he really didn't answer the question. Or he answered it in an enigmatic Buddhist way. Buddhists don't use the word, "God." I think Buddhism is more of a philosophy than a religion.

The Phone and the Sign of Death

When I went to Naisou, just north of the capital city of Chongju, in 1963 I had a dickens of a time trying to get a telephone. I'd ask for it and nothing would happen. I finally found out that my catechist, my in-between man, wouldn't accept a telephone number that had a four in it. And the only telephone number left was 444. And for the

Koreans, the number 4 is a sign of death. So he says, “Oh, you don’t want that, no one will call you.” The Bishop says, “I don’t care what the number is, I want you to have a telephone so I can call you.”

Strictness and flexibility

Catholicism in Korea in the 50s and 60s was very strict and old-fashioned, but we did a lot of things that would have horrified Rome, if Rome had known about them. In Advent, 1964 I think, we had to start to say mass in Korean. The Bishop Pardy sent a letter out in July ordering us to do this. I was furious. I jumped on my bicycle and rode ten miles to see him. I told him the rule was ridiculous. I didn’t know enough Korean to say a mass and read the gospel properly. He said, “Relax Dan. That’s a letter from Rome. This is what we’ll do. “Begin Mass with the sign of the cross in Korean and say the rest in Latin following the existing custom with the catechist saying in Korean what you say in Latin.” Pardy was a practical missionary. He wasn’t going to let us mess up the Mass by saying it in our lousy Korean.

But the rules caused heartache at times. I had this wonderful village when I was up there in Naisu. There was this old grandmother who would walk ten miles to mass every Sunday. She had everybody in the village excited about the Catholic Church. One day she came to me with a problem.

It was a custom in the traditional religion of Korea to have a ceremony on, I think, the seventh anniversary of someone’s death where the bones would be disinterred and burned. This left room for more bodies to be buried. Land was too scarce to be tied up in cemeteries. The bones of her father-in-law were going to be burned, and it was this woman’s job to prepare the ceremonial meal. The problem was that one of the Catholics in the village told her that as a Catholic she couldn’t do that.

I told her she could, but my catechist, a Korean elder, was appalled. He said, “Father, you can’t do that. That’s not allowed. That offering of the meal is a pagan

sacrifice. They call it ‘going to the mountain.’ It’s absolutely forbidden for Catholics to go to the mountain.” I checked with one of the young priests and he agreed. He said, “Oh, you can’t do that, absolutely not, you’ll get in real trouble. You’ll get kicked out of Korea if you let a Catholic do that. Tell her absolutely not.”

I told the grandmother that she couldn’t participate in that meal. She did as her family duty required and she never came back to church again. We were never welcome in that village again. The priest who told me the rule left the priesthood five years later and married a Korean woman. After Vatican II we became flexible on those things. Now Catholics can participate in traditional rituals like that.

Different views of the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War did a lot of good for the Koreans. Korea had troops in Vietnam. The soldiers were paid U.S. Army wages, and the money was deposited in the bank for them. When they came back, they brought all kinds of consumer goods -- refrigerators, stoves, air conditioners, radios, television. And they’d sell this stuff for three times what they paid for it. This gave a lot of soldiers the money they needed to buy land and start a farm.

The American missionaries were divided about the war. The young priests were totally against it and the old priests thought it was very good. Get rid of those Communists. They had bitter memories of the suffering that Communist North Korea inflicted on the South.

Of course a lot of Maryknollers suffered under Communism too. The second Superior General, James Edward Walsh, the bishop who ordained me, spent eighteen

years in prison in China. They released him because they thought he might die in prison, and the Communists didn't want that.

The Black Market Isn't Black and White

I wouldn't be surprised at all if Bishop Walsh was guilty of what the Communists accused him of exchanging money illegally on the black market. Everybody did it. You could always get more for your money that way.

Opinions were divided about the morality of black market transactions. Some people saw it as a simple free market operation: people freely exchanging things of value for their mutual benefit. But moral theologians frowned on it. They pointed out that it was breaking a civil law, and it could have bad effects on a nation's economy. On the other hand, was the government acting responsibly when they set an artificial rate of exchange? And there's God's work to consider. Is it fair to the benefactors of Maryknoll if we don't get the maximum value for the money they give us?

It's a gray area. I didn't handle money when I was superior, but I know that the brother who exchanged our American dollars got much more for them than the official exchange rate.

I knew about it. I never went to confession about it.

IV

Welcome to the New Regional Superior

On February 1, 1967, I got a phone call from Fr. Jervis Coxen, my superior, saying, “I just got a cable. You’ve been named regional superior. My term is up today and you’re replacing me. I expect you to come up and take over my job in twenty-four hours.”

I was stunned. I told him, “I don’t want the job and I’m not going to take it.”

“You can’t do that,” he says. “You got about 90 percent of the vote. The guys want you.” We had about ninety men in Korea. I think eighty-one voted for me.

So I went. I wrapped up things as best I could in Nasou and arrived in Seoul three days later. I hardly got any welcome from Coxen at all. But he says, “Here’s something for you, open it up.” He had opened it up already. It was a priest saying he was leaving the priesthood. Coxen says, “This is yours. There are three others on my desk. I’ll take care of those, but this one is yours, you take care of it.”

Welcome to the job. Guys were quitting, and I had absolutely no idea why. The mission in Korea was started in 1923. From 1923 to 1961, only one priest left the priesthood. In the years I was regional superior, ## priests left. The priests who left were priests that had been eminently successful in baptisms, eminently successful in starting new missions, bringing people into the church. I would say that each of the first twenty-five priests who left were probably responsible for a minimum of two thousand converts each from the time they’d been in Korea. They were excellent in the language (which, of course, led to the fact that they were marrying Koreans). They were intelligent, hard working priests. No slouches, no drinking problems, none of that.

Why did it happen? The Vatican Council changed the way priests related to their superiors. No more, “You do this, you do that.” And they started thinking differently about their work. The thinking was, “I’m thirty-five, thirty-six years old now, I don’t see myself as getting any fulfillment out of this life in ten years more.” So they left.

Troubles with a Bishop

One of the troubles I had was with the local bishop, a Maryknoll bishop, an American, named James Pardy. Bishop Pardy was a military man. During WWII he was a chaplain in the Air Force. I admired him, but he was a tough man. He had to be treated with kid gloves. You didn't confront him, or he became your enemy. He attended the Vatican Council, but he thought it was a waste of time.

I worked under him during my first tour in Korea, and he showed great confidence in me. Shortly before the Vatican Council started he called me in and asked me to look over the agenda for the Vatican Council. I went through it; it was all in Latin. I was appalled. I said to myself, "My God! They're just going through four years of systematic theology." Which I thought was an absolute waste of time when I was in the seminary. I didn't learn a thing in four years of theology. Of course the bishops at the Council threw out that agenda in the first session.

The Council changed a lot of things, but Bishop Pardy didn't want to change. Men were asking for conferences with him. They wanted to consult about the work. They were talking to each other. But Pardy refused. "I deal with priests one by one," he said. I don't deal with groups of priests. I don't want you even talking to one another about these things. The best way we're going to keep things going is keep at your work, listen to me and do what you're told."

We clashed over assigning priests to parishes. As superior, I had the authority to assign Maryknoll priests to parishes. The bishop could ask me to assign people, but the authority was mine. I wrote him a letter reminding him of that; it was written in the constitution of the society. He said, "I won't do it." I wrote him a letter, saying, please think this over, because if you don't change, you're going to regret it. Maryknoll subsidized the operation of Bishop Pardy's diocese. I controlled this money. I told him I would cut off Maryknoll support if he didn't let me assign priests as I saw fit.

He called me: "You wouldn't dare do that."

I said, “I hope I’ll never do it.”

Soon we had our clash. Bishop Pardy assigned a priest to a parish and asked for money to help in the running of the parish. I ordered the priest to come to Seoul. I told the Bishop that I was assigning the priest to another diocese, and that no money would be forthcoming.

It didn’t take long for the bishop to give in. This happened right at the beginning of my tenure as regional superior. It had happened in other Maryknoll regions. But I didn’t know that at the time.

An angry papal nuncio

Bishop Pardy’s dictatorial style was a factor in men leaving the priesthood in Korea. Many did not want to work under him. He didn’t recognize any opinions other than his own. He wouldn’t consult. Pressure was brought to bear, and finally Pardy resigned, for health reasons.

The Apostolic Nuncio, the official representative of the Pope in Korea, sent me a letter asking me to present the names of three priests whom I thought could succeed Bishop Pardy. This was a standard procedure. The Nuncio asked other people for names, and the whole process was supposed to be secret. When I got the letter, I read it, and then gave it to the brother. I told him to copy it and send it out to all of my priests. I asked them to help me in this consultation process. The brother was worried.

“It’s *subsecreto*,” he said. You’re not supposed to show this to me, you’re not supposed to show this to anybody.”

I said, “In this day and age? Priests should be consulted on the appointment of bishops. Send it out.”

Well, one of the priests sent the letter to the Nuncio.

He called me on the phone. "You can be excommunicated for doing that. You're going to regret this."

I objected. The Nuncio went on to denounce me for baptizing a child three years before. The infant was the child of a priest who had left.

"You baptized the child of Frank Ryan," the Nuncio said. He's a Judas."

"Excuse me, he's a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," I said.

"You are impudent, young man. You'll regret this." He hung up.

Not long afterward I'm back at Maryknoll, and Fr. McCormick calls me in his office and says, "You know, you're in real trouble over there in Korea. The papal nuncio for Korea was in here last week demanding that I remove you as superior."

"I said, 'What did he do? Murder someone?'"

"'He broke the seal and he publicized the letter asking for names for the new Bishop,' the Nuncio said."

"I told him I wouldn't even think of removing Fr. Schneider unless I got his side of the story. Was there anything else?"

"He says, 'Yes. He baptized the child of an ex-priest.'"

"I said, 'Ex-priest? We're all priests forever."

"The Nuncio said, 'You're an impudent young man.'"

I can laugh at things like that now, but back then I couldn't laugh.

A Resignation Refused

I had all sorts of support from the priests that stayed, but I took the departures as a personal burden. And my support eroded. I had three consultors to help me in running the mission; within a year, they'd all quit to get married. Two of the new consultors left too. Within five years five of my assistants had left to get married. None of them talked to me about anything. They just walked in one day and said, "I'm leaving. I have a one-way ticket home." I was just completely drained emotionally. I look back: I must have been in a very severe depression. No one called it that, but it must have been, because the pain was so great.

In March or April, 1971, I'd had enough. I told Brother Raymond Nihill, who was the only one I could talk to at the time, that I was going to write to the Superior General and resign. I asked him to type the final copy of the letter.

Ray says, "Wait a minute." He had tears in his eyes. "You're not going to get married are you?" I said, "Oh no no, I'm not getting married. I'll stay here. I just don't want to be the superior anymore." He says, "I don't think that's a good idea." I said, "I'll write the letter out," but he said, "I think you better call John McCormick, the Superior General, and tell him that you want to resign. Read him the letter personally." So, that was a new thing, "You mean you can call? You can get on the phone now?" "Sure," Brother Ray said.

I called the Superior General in New York and told him I wanted to see him. He said, "Well, I'm heading tomorrow for Taiwan. Suppose I meet you on such-and-such a date. You check in at the Mandarin Hotel in Taipai, and I'll call you." So I went to Taiwan, checked into the hotel and waited for John.

The call came, then John came. He came into the room and sat down.

I said, "I have something to give to you."

"Oh I don't need it," he said.

"What do you mean?"

“I know what it is.”

“What is it?”

“You’re resigning.”

“Yes. Why not read it?”

“Because I refuse it,” he said. “I won’t accept a resignation from you. I will be no part of you quitting. Schneider. You’re only about two years older than I am. You’ve had everything on a golden platter, everything you touched was successful. You could be depended upon to do anything, and you never complained, you did it, everything. And now, because you are in over your head, and you can’t plan out, and you don’t have any control over the lives of your men, you just want to run away from it. And I won’t let you do it.”

“Well, what am I gonna do?”

He says, “You’re going to go back to Seoul, and you’re going to pick up your cross and you’re going carry it all the way to Calvary and be crucified.”

With that, he picked up the letter and tore it up into little pieces.

It was the best thing that happened in my priesthood. I went back; nothing had changed except that I had the full support of my superior. I had said that the job was too big for me, and I was told, “You’re going to have it anyway.” That was OK with me.

Maryknoll Changes

In Korea we had trouble developing a five-year plan that reflected grass roots needs. But one big factor in this was tremendous uncertainty about Maryknoll’s own plan. What were we going to be doing ten years from now?

For example, in Chung Chong province, we had about thirty Maryknoll priests and about four native priests. Within ten years there would be forty native priests and thirty Maryknoll priests. What would the Maryknoll priests be doing? Remember, we were a missionary society. The goal was to build up the native clergy and turn the local church over to them.

One answer was, build more parishes, so every priest has a parish. I challenged them to get into some areas that the Koreans weren't in. Start a Catholic radio station, open an agricultural college – things like that. Then priests started to quit in massive numbers and the problem solved itself. But I think all this uncertainty over the future of Maryknoll, uncertainty about the kind of work people would be doing, played a role in pushing men to leave.

The Transformation of Korea

I left Korea in the '70s and didn't return until the mid 80s. Staggering changes happened in Korea, beginning about the time I left. Koreans took over a vigorous local church and expanded it. The fact that forty or fifty men left Maryknoll made very little difference in evangelization at all because Korean priests were right there to take over.

The urbanization of Korea started in earnest at the same time from the early '70s on. A lot of foreign capital came in; factories sprang up. Motorola opened a big plant in Seoul, moving lots of young girls off the farms to the city and boarding them in company boarding houses. Very tightly chaperoned and very well guarded. They got their room and board and their salary check would go to their parents, ostensibly to build up a dowry for the young women so they could get married, but also used by farmers to plant better food, and by farm equipment.

The changes were amazing. Pu Kang, where I first had a parish about ten miles south of Chongju, the capital city, was entirely agriculture when I went there in 1957. When I visited in 1984 there was practically no farming; it's all factories there. There

used to be a dirt road ten miles to the capital. Now there is a four-lane highway. Fifteen years before I had a motor bike to travel around a village. Now the village was gone, replaced by high rise apartment buildings. Millions of people were living in an area where there a few thousand in 1958.

Evangelization was explosive in the 60s and 70s. Now it has slowed down. As people got in a better position materially, they have less desire or opportunity or need for God and for worship. Evangelization is still very good compared to the church in the west, but it's slower than it was.

The Korean Missionaries

The missionary spirit is alive in Korea. Korean bishops are sending missionaries to New Guinea, I think Peru, I think the Philippines. They are even coming to the United States, as I found out personally.

For many years I pastored a small congregation of Koreans in Kansas City. I had retired from Maryknoll at age 65, and at age 75 the bishop agreed to replace me as pastor of this Korean group. When I was approaching age 80 he finally did something about it. We found a priest in Los Angeles who was recruiting Korean priests to come to the US, and one of them came to Kansas City.

The priest's name sounded familiar to me. Had I met his family somewhere? I asked. I'm from Chongju, he said. Your name is Park. Is the name Sylvester Park familiar? He said, "Yes, that was my grandfather." And I said, "He was my catechist in 1956 when I first came to Korea.

So there you have it. I went to Korea as a missionary priest and helped build up the Chongju diocese. Forty years later the Chongju diocese sends my catechist's grandson as a missionary to the United States to replace me so I could retire.

Vanishing Mission Spirit

We know all about the changes in the church in the United States and in American society. We've lived through them. But I want to draw attention to one change that doesn't get mentioned very often. That's the decline in the spirit of missionary evangelism. We're not reaching out. We still think almost exclusively in terms of having a stronger Church in our own country – to have a better standard of living, better education of our children, and so forth. We've lost the idea that the faith is to be shared. It's certainly true with the clergy. American priests and bishops have very little interest in the foreign missions.

This affects Maryknoll profoundly. We began in 1911. We got permission from the Holy Father to start the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America to train, ordain and then send priests and brothers to lands designated by the Holy Father as mission lands. The idea was that we were sent by the Church in America. Maryknoll existed because the Church in America had this vision of the necessity of sending the cream of the crop overseas to get the Church started. Now that we're getting very close to a hundred years as a missionary society we really don't have very much of that mission vision left in the United States.

The clergy and the bishops have been very good in providing Maryknoll with the opportunity to preach in the churches on Sunday, to promote Maryknoll magazine, to talk to people. And the Society has had some success with lay people. We have about 250 lay people working overseas in Maryknoll missions, and more are coming. But the mission spirit in general is vanishing.

It seems part of our culture. Young people are no longer fired up by service in Peace Corps. A lot of people aren't interested in exporting anything American. We think that our faith is good for us, but not necessarily for other people.

The Glory of Maryknoll

So something new is coming. I remember in the novitiate, when I was about 25 years old, the novice master saying, "Brothers, it's going to be the glory of Maryknoll when we're no longer needed. Within a hundred years, we will no longer be needed in the Orient -- in China, Japan or Korea -- they will have their own foreign mission seminaries, and they will be sending missionaries out themselves." And we used to say, "That's going to be a long time." But that's what has happened in Korea, and in Peru, and in the Philippines. They all have their own seminaries for missionary priests. The foreign mission seminary in Korea is twenty-five years old.

The decline in numbers in Maryknoll is hard for many people, particularly the older men. They lament the decline in vocations. But this decline is almost built in to our purpose. We do not take vocations from the countries we work in. Our purpose is build up a local church and turn it over to the local people. By contrast, look at the Jesuits. When I went to Korea in 1956, the Jesuits had just arrived from the Milwaukee province. I think there were four Jesuits, three priests and one brother, all Americans. They came to build a Catholic University. Today they have four American priests from the Milwaukee province, and something like sixty or seventy Korean Jesuits. The Passionists and the Franciscans and other orders have grown the same way. Maryknoll's heritage is the diocesan priests, secular priests, banded together for mutual support of one another, so that we'll be able to have the wherewithal and the material to do our work among poor people who can't support us.

I think our founders understood that Maryknoll is not going to last forever. It's pretty tough when you've got all this real estate that you have to maintain while the numbers go down. You sort of have that idea, the last person around, turn off the lights. No. I think the thinking of our founders would be, "We don't have to have large numbers of priests. We need priests as spiritual directors because we get lay people involved. Evangelization must come from the grass roots, and the clergy is not the grass roots. The

grass roots in evangelization comes from baptism as Christians, not out of ordination as deacons or as priests.

Who was standing there with Jesus on the Mount of the Ascension? Who heard him say, “Go to the whole world and preach the gospel?” Just the eleven apostles? There definitely must have been a lot of men and women there. The call for baptism is for every baptized person to go out and baptize. And baptize not just in the liturgical sense, or the rite, but immerse everybody you meet in the love and the goodness and the forgiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just smother them with your love, bathe them in it, immerse them in the love of God.

It’s a great glory of Maryknoll to say we have something like 300 lay missionaries. We have more than 500 affiliates who go to the missions part-time, say three weeks in the summer as teachers, as doctors, as dentists. It’s coming more slowly than we’d like; we’d like to see thousands of people doing this. But it’s real and it’s growing. It’s something that never existed before.

I am very optimistic about Maryknoll.