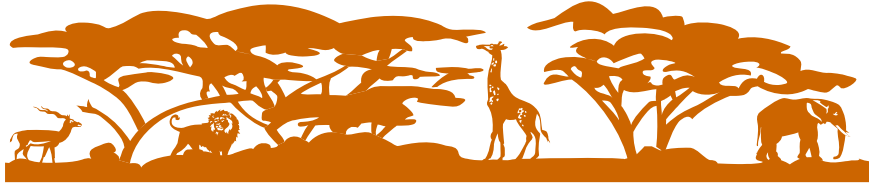


MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS

AFRICA REGION



December 2007

Making a Small Difference in Africa

The theme of this issue originated in a conversation with Father Ed Davis about how we Maryknollers can make a small difference in Africa. He gave the example of encouraging our catechists to be more creative and resourceful in their teaching methods. Over these many years (1946 to 2007) we Maryknollers have had many opportunities to do something small, but significant, in our parishes, in schools, in other apostolates, in the lives of African people.

While the examples and stories in this issue are very positive and uplifting, they are not without a cost. They come with many missionary sacrifices and struggles. Recently I read an article about *Be the Change*, a book edited by Michelle Nunn about the power of one person to make a difference in the world. She said: "People resonate when we have a sense of the common vulnerability we all share." "Why They Inspire" is a related article in the 29 May 2007 issue of *USA Today* about 25 people in the last 25 years who most touched the hearts and minds of people in America, moved us and inspired us to do better. People who changed us, captivated us and enriched us including Nelson Mandela of South Africa. The article describes what these people have in common:

1. People who move us are often people who suffer for their goals or suffer for an inexplicable reason.
2. Some leaders use their pain to set examples for others. They are living the cause.
3. Leaders are defined by genuineness and humility. They come across as real people. They keep promises and persevere despite long odds.

Along with our own sacrifices and struggles the African people with whom we live and work also persevere despite long odds. The first president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, once said: "In Africa we have many problems but we remain cheerful." A Rwandan genocide survivor who is living proof of the strength of faith and the power of forgiveness said: "You can do anything. God has you here for a good purpose. You can be the one to change the world."

Making a Strong Statement to Parish Members in Namibia

By Mark Gruenke

Theme
Article

I believe that the Spirit accomplishes more through us than we realize. What might seem to us to be an insignificant act or statement on our part can become a moment of grace or even of conversion for someone else. For example, what seems to be a normal and natural way for us to behave toward others can touch them in a profound way. Let me give an example from my experience in Namibia. To understand better the story we need to recall that Namibia has only recently freed itself from apartheid.

Our parish vehicle was in a garage in Rundu, the local regional commercial center in northern Namibia. I told the young black woman behind the counter that I had come in the name of the pastor to pick up the car. She said that she is confused because she can't figure out who is the pastor. Since I was not the pastor then "that German priest" must be the pastor. The "German priest," Fr. Denner, runs a Caritas project within our parish. I tried to explain to her that our pastor was Fr. Charles Mikaya. It surprised me how definite she was that this was not possible. A black African could not possibly be the pastor if there is a German priest and white American Brothers in the parish! In her mind professional white men could not possibly be under the authority of a black African. For me this was an insight into the local mind-set of the people whom I had come to serve. Neither Loren Beaudry nor I had thought much about the significance of our decision to work in the Nyangana Mission under the authority of a pastor who was African and black. For us it seemed like a natural thing to do. Our consideration about living in Nyangana was more about what kind of ministry we would do. Yet the reaction of the woman at the garage leads me to believe that Loren and I are making a strong statement to the members of the parish simply in our willingness to serve under a black pastor.



This leads me to further wonder: In how many other ways, unknown to ourselves, does the Spirit use us to further the greater mission?

Be Content with Making a Small Difference

By Wayne Weinlader

Theme
Article

Recently a new Peace Corps volunteer working here in Rundu, Namibia with the Red Cross asked me the classic question of "How do I go on when it is apparent that I am making such an insignificant difference amidst so many problems." My response to her was that "You have asked the classic question that all new volunteers and new missionaries ask." The answer is that you only attempt to make a small difference and you should be satisfied if you can help just a few people and for just a short time. Be content with making a small difference.



I am making a small difference in Namibia by running a soup kitchen for approximately 250 AIDS orphans. In northern Namibia up by the Angolan border is the town of Rundu where some of the poorest people in Namibia live. They also have an AIDS infection rate of over 20% which results in many orphans.

The Kehemu Catholic Church sits right in the middle of the worst part of this town and serves these very poor people. A large picnic shelter with a barbecue pit has been recently built and sits at one end of the church property. Tables and benches have been built for the children. A donation was given for some playground equipment. We are now serving more than 250 orphans each day -- seven days a week. We serve a menu consisting of rice or corn meal, beans, peas, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, onions, vegetable oil, chicken or beef soup powder, and a piece of bread. We also provide fresh fruit or sweets for dessert some of the time.

For photographs of our soup kitchen and some of the orphans we serve go to our "Helping African Aids Orphans in Namibia" website: <http://www.rcchurch.na/orphans.htm>

I Appealed to the Rotary Club Head in Dar es Salaam

By Tom Tiscornia

Theme
Article

A few years ago while visiting in one of the wards at Muhimbili Hospital in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania I befriended a young heart patient from Magu. His name is Makaranga. If he walked only a few meters he would be exhausted. He needed to have heart surgery, but this meant that he might have to wait several years for his turn to go to India where he would be operated on.



Months went by and slowly he regained some of his strength. The staff would often send him on small errands -- he was liked by all. I appealed to the head of the Rotary Club here in Dar es Salaam to consider Makaranga for financial assistance. I was assured that he would be, but there were many others waiting as well.

Makaranga was told to return to Magu and to listen to the radio for his name to be called. I went to the Ministry of Health and pleaded his cause to no avail. Finally Mama Kunabe, the head of the mortuary who has a place in her soul for heart patients, connected with the right people and Makaranga went to India and had the proper heart surgery.

Today Makaranga, although in his late teens, is in Standard Six and happy as can be.

Change Someone's Life Forever Through Education

By Paul Fagan

Theme
Article

Joisi Marko is now in her second year of Law School in Tumaini (Swahili word for "Hope") University in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Very expensive but think of her future! Teddy Laurenti was tops in her Civil Engineering class. After working for one year on the Dar es Salaam International Airport runways she was invited back for higher studies. Our program "To Change Someone's Life Forever through Education" has helped between 350-400 students: three quarters girls and one quarter boys. In 2007 we are helping over 65 youth. Expenses at all levels have increased. \$600 will now educate a secondary student in a boarding school. This includes school fees, transportation, clothes, medical, special fees, pocket money, etc.



Local Kenyan People Strive to Make a Difference

By Curt Klueg

Theme
Article

All along my journey as a Maryknoll lay missionary in Mombasa, Kenya, Fred "Bokey" Achola was my guide and mentor. We gave each other mutual support in our work with street children and prison inmates. As any expatriate missionary knows, the real story of their work lies with local Kenyan people who strive to make a difference in their society for very little money or notoriety. Achola is just that kind of person.

Bokey remained connected to Maryknoll as he assisted me part-time with outreach to the families of prisoners on death row. As a veteran social worker who has spent many years managing the hope and despair, the joys and pains of street children, Bokey conveyed the same compassion and understanding to families of prisoners who are often receiving news of their imprisoned loved ones for the first time.

Once, four hours from Mombasa, we found a family that knew nothing of their son's imprisonment and death sentence. The family began wailing and screaming. Bokey, who comes from the same ethnic background as the family, was able to offer comfort and hope in a way that only a member of the Luo Ethnic Group could especially since the family spoke very little Swahili or English.

This is just one of the countless tales, familiar to most missionaries, of local people meeting Christ in the guise of neighbors and fellow citizens, of whom Bokey is a stellar example.

(Adapted from the article "A Boxer Champions Kenyan Street Kids" in the September, 2007 Maryknoll Magazine).

Some "Small" Experiences in Tanzania

By Hung Minh Dinh

Theme
Article

From living in Tanzania for the last two years during my Overseas Training Program (OTP), I have learned from some "small" experiences that have changed my life. A week before our language school began, I went into a local barber shop in Mwanza town to get a haircut. The barber greeted me in English so I felt confident to request that I would like my hair cut with Number 2 in the back, and the rest just trimmed lightly. I felt that he understood my request. After I sat firmly on the chair, the barber used his clippers to move from the right side to the left smoothly. I just had enough time to see my hair fall on my shoulders. Within three minutes the barber shaved and cleaned my head completely. No hair. I had no chance to say anything, but smiled and accepted this situation. Later I looked around and realized that everybody in the shop had short hair. So I understood how difficult it was for the local people to have a concept of "cutting" my hair. This small experience reminded me to be aware in a new culture not to assume that other people's understanding is just like my understanding. So with my new hair style, I showed up at the language school like a Buddhist monk.



Our group in the Makoko Language School was very diverse. My classmates came from 12 different countries, spoke different languages and had different cultural backgrounds. We came from Indonesia, Japan, Peru, Poland, Brazil, Germany, Vietnam, Canada, USA, Mexico, India, and Brunei. We also came from different religious orders and societies (such as Franciscans, Sisters of Charity, SMA, Maryknoll), diocesan priests, and lay movements... However, we were all Christians and studied the same language: Swahili. We lived as a community, shared meals, prayed together and learned a new language. Usually each time we made a mistake in pronunciation we learned a new word! For instance, to say *kaburi* ("a grave") instead of *karibu* ("welcome") or *nyani* ("monkey") instead *nanyi* ("you" plural).

After four months I began my ministry in Mabatini Parish in Mwanza where Father Jim Eble is the pastor. Although the parish does not have outstations, it has 22 Small Christian Communities (*jumuiya* in Swahili). Visiting the sick in the *jumuiyas* was a highlight of my pastoral work. I will not forget an experience when I went to visit a very sick 50-year-old grade school teacher who lived in St.

Michael *jumuiya*. When we got there her tiny hut was packed with many people from her community. Her family was so happy to have us visit and considered it as a blessing. She had malaria and an upset stomach that caused her a very high fever, but she felt really cold. The patient was lying on the bed and covered her very skinny body with a thick blanket from neck to toe. She cried when she met us. We were moved by her grief. I laid my hand on her hand and I invited other people to extend their hands over her. We took turns saying decades of the rosary. I could feel the Spirit and our sense of unity during this moment.



Every other month I made a trip to Shinyanga south of Mwanza for spiritual direction. I spent time with Fathers Dan Ohmann and Don Sybertz. They are retired, but they still work "full time" everyday full of energy and joy. Dan used to take me to visit the villages where people of the Wataturu Ethnic Group live. Most of them herd cattle while others cultivate crops such as corn and rice. Wataturu people live very simply. Their food usually is *ugali* (cooked corn meal) or rice and beans, and most of them drink milk instead water especially during the dry season. They have no toilets or showers. We used to stay with them for about three to four days. We shared meals and prayed with them. At night Dan slept in the back of his pickup truck and I set up a tent and slept next to his truck. Our living situation was just as a nomad's life. It was a challenge for me to live this type of lifestyle. However, I realized that the Wataturu live like that. So I guess we also need to come and stay with them, to understand and find their needs in order to work with them. In the gospel Jesus spent three years meeting people. He walked from north to south, from Galilee to Judea. He ate, prayed and stayed with the people to bring the Good News to them. I found our time with the Wataturu relates to the life of Jesus.

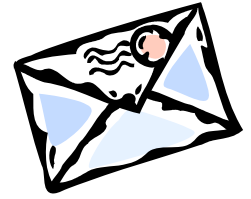


Although my time for OTP was only two years, I learned that these many "small" experiences in Tanzania have made me surer and firmer about my vocation as a Maryknoll missionary. They gave me energy and enthusiasm with love to continue my formation to be a missionary priest.

Letter to the Editor

Peace in Christ.

I thank you for sending me the "Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers: AFRICA REGION" Newsletter that I enjoy reading. I also enjoyed reading your book on "African Stories" and your other books which Father Richard Baker MM sent me from New York for the diocesan library.



I read especially the article by Mike Snyder: "Gathering of Society Members 60 years old and Younger." He writes: "As Maryknollers, we identify with 'people on the edge.' Following the example of Jesus we go to 'the edge' seeking solidarity with the outcasts and lowly in society."

Father Baker did that during his stay in Gambella, Ethiopia. Now the region that he put seeds into is an Apostolic Prefecture run by the Salesians. We have other regions where we need the pioneering work of the Maryknollers in Ethiopia. We have many people "on the edge" especially bordering Sudan.

I hope Father Baker will be able to come back. But even if he does, he shall need some support from the 60 years young and even younger! "Not to worry." Age is relative! What counts is answering His call "in season or out of season!"

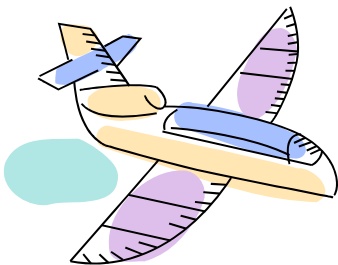
Thanking you and requesting your prayers for Ethiopia, I remain,
Yours in Christ,

+Abune Berhaneyesus D. Souraphiel CM
Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Abeba
President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Ethiopia



Does He Realize Who Is Sitting Next to Him?

By Peter LeJacq



Shortly after I arrived in East Africa as a new Maryknoll seminarian and medical doctor, I was given the privilege of accompanying a seriously ill Maryknoll priest, Father Joe Glynn, on a flight from Nairobi, Kenya back to the USA for treatment. I knew that Joe had held many leadership positions in Maryknoll over his long missionary life. Because of Joe's physical problems, we were seated in first class so he could endure the 20 hours of flight lying flat. After Joe had closed his eyes, I noticed that the famous actor Robert Redford had sat down on the other side of Joe. So I leaned over and whispered into Joe's ear, "Do you realize that Robert Redford is sitting next to you?" Without opening his eyes Joe responded, "Does he realize that Joe Glynn is sitting next to him?" Joe had been taught well by the people of East Africa to remember that we are all equal in God's eyes.

New Videos by Ukweli Video Productions

1. **Commemoration of Africa Malaria Day 2007.** Leadership and Partnership for Better Results. UK-276. 29 minutes. Production of the Division of Malaria Control for the World Health Organization (WHO). DVD and VHS. PAL and NTSC. Produced by Ukweli Video, Nairobi, 2007.
2. **The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.** Preparation for the Synod of Africa Bishops (2009). UK-277. 23 minutes. In October, 2009 the Holy Father will convene the Second African Synod of Bishops in Rome. The theme is "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace." This documentary treats Chapter Two of the *Lineamenta* (the preparatory book) and touches on "Jesus Christ, the Word and the Bread of Life, Our Reconciler, Our Justice and Our Peace." These two great mysteries show the Son of God coming into flesh and being like us and Jesus leaving us His Body and Blood as our spiritual nourishment as a sign of eternal life to be with Him forever. These are the foundation beliefs of our faith. This video shows the Catholic Social Teachings of our Church in colorful imagery and action. The Word and the Bread of Life are the spiritual and motivational forces behind dedicated Catholics following Christ. This video can stimulate discussion in our Small Christian Communities. One of three videos on chapters in the *Lineamenta* of the Second African Synod. DVD and VHS. PAL and NTSC. Produced by Ukweli Video, Nairobi, 2007.
3. **Sunset Missioners** -- The six minutes opening of this video portrays the unique spiritual and mission relationship of two Maryknoll Priests who have lived 25 years together in prayer, sharing and in sports, but most of all in their love for their people in Tanzania. They are Father Dan Ohmann and Father Don Sybertz both ordained in 1955. In many ways they are the same but each totally unique as he brings the Word of God to his people. Each pastoral approach has its own attraction and has touched the minds and hearts of their flocks.
 - a. *Fr. Dan Ohmann, M.M. -- Word of God Alive among the Wasukuma and Wataturu People of Tanzania.* UK-279. 25 minutes. Eighty-year-old Dan Ohmann has handed over all his development work to the Ndoleleji Parish and now fully concentrates on his full-time apostolate to the nomad pastoralist Wataturu people who are eager to learn the Word of God and how to pray. Dan has planted some very important seeds of faith that are already sprouting. It is the Gospel lesson that we are all God's children and need the gospel preached to us.
 - b. *Fr. Don Sybertz M.M -- Word of God in Sukuma Culture.* UK-279. 20 minutes. Don Sybertz has been a missionary among the Sukuma people for 52 years. He has a unique apostolate. He gathers proverbs, sayings, stories, and myths of the Sukuma, the largest ethnic group in Tanzania. He has written a few books on his dedicated work with his four Sukuma researchers and other collaborators. The Sukuma are a gentle and musical people. Don realized that their oral traditions and culture was the best way of bringing the Word of God to them. He simply showed them the correlation between human wisdom and biblical wisdom. Now the Word of God becomes alive in their own cultural setting attracting even more men than women. Five times every week he and his team visit new villages singing, acting out and explaining the traditional Sukuma stories in the light of the teachings of Christ. Don has made a great contribution to the church, evangelization and the wealth of Sukuma culture.

Happy Birthday to You!

John Lange	Jan. 18
David Smith	Jan. 19
Frank TenHoopen	Jan. 25
Tom Tiscornia	Feb. 5
Lance Nadeau	Feb. 10



Joe Healey	Apr. 29
Ken Thesing	May 9
Wayne Weinlader	May 12
Douglas May	June 9

The Whole Affair May Take Up To Five or Six Hours

By John Blazo

Many of the Catholic parishes around Fordham University in the Bronx, New York have priest students from around the world staying in them. These students cover weekend masses and in return the parishes give them room and board at the rectory. From time to time parishes are assigned to Maryknoll to receive mission appeals. One year I was assigned to one of these parishes. I don't remember the year or the parish's name or the name of the African priest from Tanzania who is the focus of the following story...

The morning mass was said by a Tanzanian priest and I did the preaching. Finding out I was a Maryknoller, the priest said he wanted to talk to me over a cup of coffee and breakfast so we did. He told me how he had arrived in the States only a few weeks before at Kennedy Airport. There was nobody there to meet him and he was nervous and confused and scared. One of the workers in the airport noticed him and asked what the problem was. The priest told the story of nobody being there to give him a ride. "Why don't you call them?" asked the worker. "I can't because I don't have any money" said the priest. "You don't need money to use the phone" said the worker. "What a great country," said the priest, "not only do the phones work, but you don't even need money!"

He called and found out the people who were to pick him up were stuck in traffic.

They arrived and he got to the rectory safe and sound. The pastor sat him down and they talked about the Sunday mass schedule. He was told that he had to say mass within 40 minutes because of the parking lot crunch after masses.



The Tanzanian priest was shocked because, as he explained to me, in Africa masses start whenever most of the people get there and consist of singing all the verses to all the songs, a shared homily where everybody is expected to give opinions on the readings, a true offertory dance to bring up the gifts, a kiss of peace that lasts 15 minutes or more, and a communion dance. After mass everybody stays around to socialize and eat. The whole affair may take up to five or six hours! After these comments the Tanzanian priest went on to say that if the Eucharist is the central part of our Catholic Faith, how do we teach and celebrate that in 40 minutes?



My comment was that he and other international priests are needed here in America not as Rent-a-Priests to be sacramental machines, but to be here as missionaries to show and challenge us to get a deeper understanding of our faith and how to live it out in these changing times.

His last comments were how his stomach was so upset because of all the different foods especially the Italian foods of the Italian pastor! He knew that as a Maryknoller I probably had similar experiences with different foods when I lived overseas. And I did! When the pastor returned from saying the last mass we had a nice, big lunch. We started off with pasta and the pastor urged me to eat more. But I knew more was coming so I told him truthfully of my long term intestinal trouble from my times in Central America and that I couldn't eat a lot. After the pasta came the chicken, potatoes and vegetables followed by coffee and dessert.

It was a great conversation and a great meal after preaching at all the masses and being on my feet most of the morning. I went to the parish as a missionary to share my experiences and I was pleasantly surprised to receive the missionary insights of this Tanzanian priest.

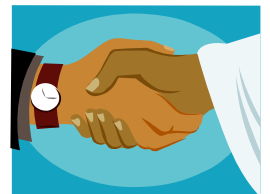
Maryknoll Africa – St. Cloud Diocese Connections

By Bill Vos

On 27 October 2007, the United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA), at their annual conference in Austin, Texas, conferred on the Diocese of St. Cloud their annual Mission Award. This award is presented to an individual or an organization that exemplifies the best of mission from within the US Catholic Church. In discerning the roots of this diocesan commitment to global mission, much credit must go to Maryknoll.

First with Bishop John Kinney himself. Many Society members will recall how he traveled throughout Tanzania and Kenya some 30 odd years ago to establish a diocesan presence while he was the Bishop of Bismarck, North Dakota, eventually choosing a site with the Society, Congregation and Lay Missioners in Bura Tana, Kenya. His relationship with Maryknoll continued after moving to St. Cloud up until the present. A few years ago he was honored by the Society with their annual Keller Award and he readily agreed to offer the annual retreat in to the members in the Africa Region and again to all at Maryknoll, New York. And, of course, he serves on the Society's Bishops' Advisory Board.

My own contribution in developing a global vision within our Diocesan Mission Office came primarily from my mission formation within the Maryknoll Mission family. This began before I began working in Africa as I hosted developers like John Lange, Dan Ohmann, Herb Gappa and Ken Thesing, to mention just those with African backgrounds.



Then I recall my early orientation in Tanzania, doing Pastoral Theological Reflection with the likes of Carroll Houle, Mike Snyder and Ed Dougherty. And forming a mission spirituality within the Jesus Caritas groups under the leadership of Joe Healey. And living with both newly ordained and seminarians doing their OTP like Larry Radice and Dave Smith. And working with a number of Maryknoll Sisters like Joyce Burch, Pat Gallogly and Bernice Rigney in a wonderful village apostolate. And during my time as Africa Coordinator of the Lay Missioners enjoying the exceptional collaboration and support of our lay members by Society and Congregation members.

Now as our diocese has established a number of Global Solidarity Partnerships, we continue to rely on the many resources of Maryknoll to inform and support our efforts, everything from Orbis Books publications and mission education materials to Maryknoll personnel themselves. Among the latter would be Greg Darr who heads up the mid-western development office as he and developers like Dave Schwinghammer assist with formation of our delegations to East Africa. We are particularly proud of our "revered elder," St. Cloud native Dan Ohmann who accompanies every delegation to our Sister Diocese of Homa Bay, Kenya. See the report "A Case Study in Global Solidarity: The St. Cloud -- Homa Bay Partnership" by William Vos, Agnes Kithikii and Ron Pagnucco.

Call for Articles for Our Next Issue

Date: June 2008

Theme: University Ministry in Africa

Material to Editor by: 15 April 2008

Please send material to the Editor, Joe Healey, by Email to:

JGHealey@aol.com or by paper mail to: Maryknoll Society House,
P.O. Box 43058, Nairobi, Kenya (for scanning into a computer).