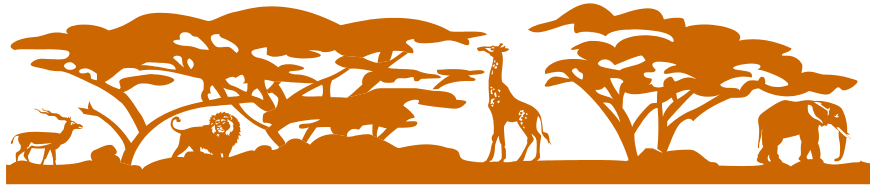


# MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS

# AFRICA REGION



January 2011

## Formation for Ministry in Africa

The issues of our *Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers Africa Regional Newsletter* in the 2009-2011 period are connected to the follow-up and implementation of our 2008 Twelfth General Chapter of the Maryknoll Society in Africa. When he was the assistant regional of the Africa Region, Brother Mark Gruenke suggested this January, 2011 issue's theme of "Formation for Ministry in Africa." This is closely linked to the 1994 First Africa Synod's emphasis on the formation and training of agents of evangelization in Africa (Numbers 53 and 54 of the Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortation *The Church in Africa*).

The section on "Recruitment/Formation" in our chapter letter *Keeping Alive the Flame of Mission* states: "Leadership should also continue to investigate an intercultural theological formation in an overseas context as a constitutive element of the formation process." Two of the Maryknoll Society's most successful efforts have been the Overseas Training Program (OTP) in Africa now in its 43rd year (1968 – 2011) and the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies of St. Mary's University of Minnesota, USA (MIASMU) Program located at Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya now in its 22nd year (1989-2011) <http://www.tangaza.org/mias.html>. Both are highlighted in this issue.

Another section on "Recruitment/Formation" in *Keeping Alive the Flame of Mission* states: "Leadership should explore ways of collaborating with member institutes of the organization of Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life (MISAL) in formation of candidates because they are most closely associated with the mission vision that exists in Maryknoll." Maryknoll has close collaboration with other missionary societies at Tangaza College and Hekima College, both constitutive colleges of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. We also have close links with the Apostles of Jesus Missionary Congregation with headquarters in Nairobi.

*(continued next page)*

**Keeping Alive the Flame of Mission**

Formation and training of lay people have been a priority of Maryknoll throughout the history of the Africa Region. We remember our various pastoral, social and development training centers in East Africa such as the Makoko Family Living Center in Musoma, Tanzania, the Komuge Catechists School in Musoma, Tanzania, the Mipa Catechists School in Shinyanga, Tanzania and the Viongozi Centre in Kisii, Kenya. The Pope John Paul II Catholic Evangelizing Parish Teams in Kenya are described in this issue. A more recent effort is the Kenyatta University Catholic Chaplaincy program in Nairobi, Kenya that sends university students as parish ministers/missionaries to the dioceses of Marsabit, Malindi, and Kitale every year during the June-July break. The chaplain, Father Lance Nadeau, sees this in-service pastoral training as a key part of the formation of lay ministers/missionaries.

In this period of implementing our 2008 Twelfth General Chapter Father Gene Toland and others initiated a lively email exchange in the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (CFMSA) Renewal Google Discussion Group. Our Regional Superior Father Lance Nadeau's comment is very pertinent. "The Africa Region isn't a very vocal group. However, I think we're making serious efforts to deal with the chapter's call for renewal." There is a close link between renewal in the Maryknoll Society and our various programs for "Formation for Ministry in Africa." This issue of our newsletter shares our efforts here in Africa with the wider Maryknoll.

## Forty-Two Years of the Overseas Training Program (OTP) in Africa: 1968 – 2010

*By Mike Snyder and Lam Hua*

**Theme  
Article**

We have a long history of welcoming Maryknoll seminarians and Brother candidates to Africa through the Overseas Training Program (OTP). Even prior to formalizing the program in the early 1970s, Maryknoll sent seminarians to Tanzania in 1968 on an experimental basis. Principally using a mentoring and apprenticeship model, OTP in Africa trains an individual "pole pole" (step-by-step), nurturing him for life as a missionary.



OTP begins with two of what have been among the greatest missionary formation success stories in Maryknoll Africa's history. First, the candidate studies at the Maryknoll Institute for African Studies (MIAS) in Nairobi, Kenya (see accompanying article). In recent years, MIAS studies have been required not just for new Maryknoll missionaries coming to Africa, but for all Society candidates in the Initial Formation Program, no matter where in the world they will be sent on OTP.

After a summer semester at MIAS the candidate moves on to the Makoko Language School in Musoma, Tanzania. Begun in 1964 by Father Phil Sheerin, M.M. and Sister Anita MacWilliams, M.M., this school has educated over 2,000 men and women from throughout the world who come to East Africa as missionaries. Principally they come to study Swahili, but orientation to culture is also a main component. Over the years the school has also offered courses in local indigenous languages: Luo, Kuria, Sukuma, and Kisii. The full circle for a missionary success story is the turning over of institutions to the local Church. In January, 2001 the Society officially placed the Makoko Language School in the hands of the local Diocese of Musoma. Today, nine years later, the school continues to thrive -- training new Priests, Brothers, Sisters, and Lay Missioners for mission in East Africa.

*(continued next page)*



Makoko Language School, Musoma, Tanzania

Upon completing the Basic Swahili language training, the OTP candidate takes up residence at one of our missions under the tutelage of experienced Maryknollers. In years past some have remained at one placement for the full duration of this two year program. But often the candidate moves to a new station halfway through the program to broaden his African missionary experience. The candidate's language and cultural acquisition is key to the OTP program's success, as its major strength lies in giving the individual the tools necessary to enter deeply into the life and culture of the African people. During the OTP years the candidate is not burdened with many pastoral responsibilities. Rather, he is encouraged to get out among the people, develop his language skills, spend time and enjoy meals with them and establish healthy friendships.

In the end, the Overseas Training Program has always revealed to both the Society and the candidate whether he has chosen the right vocation in life. Let me invite you to read comments from our newest OTP candidate, Seminarian Lam Hua who has just finished studying Swahili at the Makoko Language School and is doing his first placement in Buza Parish in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



Hi! My name is Lam Hua. My excitement of entering into the African culture received satiation by Maryknoll's MIAS program in Nairobi. The program provided me a beneficial experience in that it not only had instruction by native lecturers, but also advocated personal contact with the local populace. I found that affirming classroom knowledge with field research to be an experientially valuable and advantageous process of ministry. Understanding various particular situations of classroom concepts through in-person interviews has deepened my awareness of pastoral ministry as being important as any theological argument from the Catholic Theological Union (CTU).

I would certainly not forget the memorable experience of a village visit during the MIAS program, when I visited the village home of my field assistant in western Kenya near Kakamega. This visit was much more than just another interview because I was able to see how people live outside the city setting where cultural fidelity is still strong. I was able to see their relationship with one another, which urban centers might have detached. I learned that ministry could begin at any place or time because of this visit, for the local elders invited me to a local bar to drink a locally brewed alcoholic beverage. I drank a mere few small gulps but the hours spent talking with the elders was an experience of forming me for ministry because getting to know the people is a foundation on which Maryknoll's mission charism is focused. Beginning my OTP experience with an introduction to African culture has alleviated some would-be cultural shocks that prepared my mind with openness for further learning from the local culture.

*(continued next page)*

Although the MIAS program has satiated my excitement of entering into the African culture, I felt a new hunger at the completion of the program for understanding the local people and their culture from their own perspective, namely language. I thought it was fitting that the OTP language program came after the MIAS program because I was ready to receive the tools necessary to delve further into the culture. For me, there are many questions and aspects of culture left over from the MIAS program that I could only learn if I knew the language.



Sharing locally brewed drink with village elders

At the time of writing these words, I have completed my Swahili studies at the Makoko Language School. As difficult as Swahili may seem to me, I studied in an environment that fosters openness to the uniqueness of cultures. From grammar words on the board to talking broken Kiswahili with random kids in the streets, I began to learn what it means to enter into the culture especially here in Tanzania. Along with other religious at the school, we all appreciated the opportunity to also study aspects of Kiswahili related to our ministry, namely Church terms. Besides from lessons that integrated events in the local people's lives, we also received weekly sessions on particular aspects of culture from the local teachers. In the three months at this school, I was able to attend Sunday mass at various locations that allowed me to see how people worship and live their faith. The possibility to visit local homes was a valuable opportunity that has enriched my understanding of how people live according to their culture and circumstances. This was the beginning to "knowing the community" even though I will not be here long enough to be fully acquainted with the whole of tiny Makoko.

A particularly valuable piece of experience was the opportunity for me to accompany various Maryknollers in their ministry since the time I arrived in Africa. Ministry for the Maryknollers I have met involves various different activities, people, cultures, and circumstances. Some of their ministries have interested me while others have not. I know the possibilities are numerous for me to start experiencing ministry, even for a seminarian on OTP.

Maryknoll has sent seminarians and brother candidates to Africa for over 40 years for an OTP experience. Even with the program's long presence, I feel as though I am one of the first to participate in the OTP program because I do not know what will be the outcome of my language studies, culture studies, or ministerial work. Like the first students to participate in the OTP program, I hope that I will be formed for ministry.

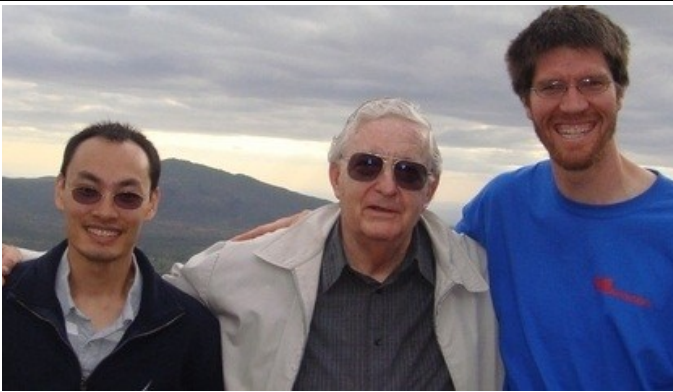
## Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS) Thrives

*By Michael Kirwen*

Theme  
Article

The primary goal of the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS) program, a postgraduate program that is an institute of Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya, is to teach systematically contemporary cultures and religion of East Africa in such a way that students begin to appropriate and articulate an African perspective on these realities. It is designed for the following types of postgraduate students:

*(continued next page)*



MIAS Director Mike Kirwen with two Maryknoll seminarians, Lam Hua and Shaun Crumb, participants of the Summer 2010 session

1. Indigenous and missionary personnel including priests, sisters, seminarians, and laity assigned to apostolates in East Africa and NGO personnel for primary acculturation and/or updating.
2. African students and African pastoral and developmental agents for systematic introduction and/or updating in contemporary African life and reality.
3. Neophyte lecturers and students from outside Africa for primary acculturation.

The African students, who make up close to half of the student body, are challenged to understand and articulate as adults the rich cultural heritage that is theirs by reason of birth. The non-African students are challenged to learn African Cultural Knowledge in a systematic, formal manner so that they can interact with African people as adults in an African cultural milieu.

The program is designed to meet the needs of both degree students and continuing education students. The program is ecumenical and open to students of all faiths. It is sponsored by the Africa Area of the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers and is affiliated academically with Saint Mary's University of Minnesota /USA which registers the courses, generates the transcripts, and grants both a Master of Arts (MA) degree in African Studies, and a Masters of African Studies (MAS) degree and Tangaza College, Nairobi, Kenya which grants Certificates and Diplomas in African Studies. The program was developed as a response to the need for a contextualized approach to teaching cultures and religion of Africa, and training bi-cultural pastoral and developmental agents in Africa. MIAS gives students the tools to analyze African culture.

MIAS's Semester Program will be from 14 January, 2011 to 9 April, 2011. The Immersion Programs will be from 24 May, 2011 to 16 June, 2011 and from 21 June, 2011 to 14 July, 2011. As part of the Maryknoll Society's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations there will be a MIASMU African Cultural Fair at Tangaza College in Nairobi from 15 –17 September, 2011. It will celebrate Maryknoll's contribution to the in-depth study of African identity and spirituality.

## Pope John Paul II Catholic Evangelizing Parish Teams Form Lay People in Kenya

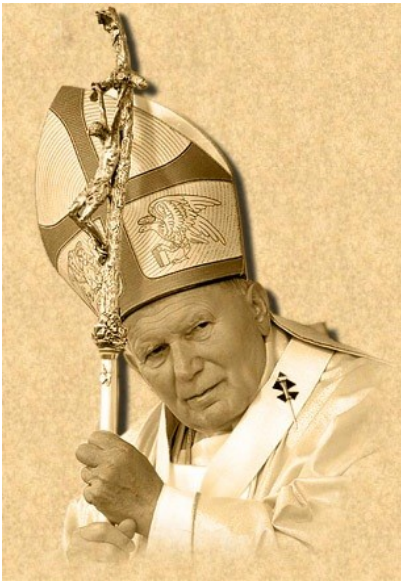
*By Dick Quinn*

Theme Article

The missionary ministry of the Pope John Paul II Catholic Evangelizing Parish Teams in Kenya started in 1991. It is inspired by the section on "We All Need Formation" in the Simplified Text of the *Apostolic Exhortation on the 1994 [First] African Synod*:

"In all areas of Church life, formation is extremely important. People who have never had the chance to learn cannot really know the truths of faith, nor can they do what they have never been taught. The whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelization, each according to his or her specific role within the Church. This includes Bishops, priests, religious and all the lay faithful. The formation program will stress the training of lay people, so that they will fully exercise their role of inspiring the temporal order – political, cultural, economic and social – with Christian principles. This is the specific task of the laity's vocation in the world."

*(continued next page)*



Around 60 evangelizers, mainly laymen and laywomen, meet on the Third Sunday of every month for a three hour formation meeting that includes prayer, gospel reflection, personal witness and testimony stories, videos and speakers on a wide variety of mission-related topics such as: abortion, active non-violence, addiction, challenge of secularization, environment, evangelizing at the university, family ministry, healing and deliverance, Islam, marriage, mass media, models of ministry, Small Christian Communities, spirituality, storytelling and youth. The overall theme for 2009-2011 has been the theme of the Second African Synod: “The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.”

There is a four-day National Workshop on Catholic Evangelization every August. Other activities include mission crusades in parishes and producing radio programs for “Thought for the Day,” “Epilogues” and “Sunday Service” on Citizen Radio and Kenya Broadcasting Corporation.

As part of the Maryknoll Society’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations there will be a Mass, Lunch and Special Formation Meeting of the John Paul II Catholic Evangelizing Parish Teams at the Maryknoll Society House in Nairobi on Sunday, 19 June, 2011.

## 9 January, 2011 Referendum in Sudan

By Tom Tiscornia

As the Sudanese bishops noted in their recent Pastoral Letter *A Future Full of Hope*:

This is an historical moment.  
This is a moment of change.  
Sudan will never be the same.

These are words of wisdom and courage for the people of Sudan.

For sure, all of the talk these days is about the upcoming referendum due to take place on 9 January, 2011 throughout Sudan. It is a chance for the people of South Sudan to cast their ballot either to continue as one nation or to split and become the 54<sup>th</sup> country of Africa.

Ever since gaining independence in 1956 there has been a history of division between the north and south that resulted in Africa’s longest civil war fought during two phases and resulting in the deaths of millions of people as well as displacement and migration to other countries.

The time has come. What a unique and sacred moment it is for each individual southern Sudanese person to participate in this momentous choice and vote. God willing it will happen peacefully and the outcome respected by all.



The possibility of a new country in Africa rests in the Sudanese voters

## A Glimpse into the Soul of Africa: Commemorating Fr. Dan Ohmann's 45 Years in Tanzania

By Ruth K. Meyer

This book is a collection of Father Danny's (Father Daniel Ohmann, M.M.) stories. *A Glimpse into the Soul of Africa* commemorates his forty-five years as a missionary in Africa. A lifetime to us but fleeting moments for the Africans who for centuries have yearned for meaning in a life free of fear, a life filled with hope, a life with one God.

Father Danny is my uncle and Godfather. Recent visits to his African mission in Tanzania inspired me to compile these stories to share with family, friends and future generations. The book is about his work in Shinyanga Diocese including his work with the Watatulu people and in Ndoleleji Parish as a parish priest and economic developer and with the Rwanda and Burundi refugees in Rulenge Diocese.

I begin the book with Fr. Danny's passion – the Watatulu, a seminomadic ethnic group living along the Great Rift Valley. Soon after arriving in Tanzania in 1969, Fr. Danny met a Watatulu warrior while camping. This meeting had a huge impact as it set the stage for his long relationship with this ethnic group. This is one of my favorite stories in the book.



Fr. Dan Ohmann teaching two men during Mass

### We Don't Know How to Pray!

One day Maryknoll Brother Cyril and I were camping out in the bush in Tanzania. We shot a gazelle and were roasting it over a campfire in the quiet of the evening when suddenly before our eyes stood a tall, black, somber warrior. He stood there, leaning on his spear, watching us. Completely surprised, I greeted him in Swahili, the language common to East Africans, and asked, "Can I help you?"

He answered in Swahili, "Have you seen my calves? My young son was herding them today and six are missing." Seeing him suspiciously eye the animal we were roasting, I said, "No, we have not seen your calves. This is a gazelle we shot. Have you eaten?"

"No," he said quietly. "Come, sit and eat with us," I said in an inviting way, emulating the marvelous, spontaneous hospitality of African people. With my hunting knife, I cut some roasted meat and handed it to him. I also sliced pieces for Brother Cyril and myself. As we began chewing, I noticed our guest just sitting there with the meat in his hands.

"Don't you eat gazelle meat?" I asked. "Yes, we do." "Why do you not eat then?" I asked, a little perplexed. His response caught me off guard. "Don't you pray first?" Embarrassed, I admitted, "Yes, we pray. I forgot. Do you pray?" "No," he said. "We don't know how to pray."

His answer never left my mind. I've always taken it as an invitation to go to teach the Watatulu how to pray.



The book costs \$20 and can be ordered from Ruth K. Meyer in Melrose, Minnesota (rmeyer@stcloudstate.edu); or from Jackie Ohmann, P. O. Box 21, Greenwald, MN, 56335; or from the St. Cloud Mission Office at 11 8th Avenue S, Saint Cloud, MN 56301. Phone: (320) 251-1100. It can also be purchased at the discount price of \$12 at the Maryknoll Society Gift Shop in Maryknoll, NY.



Fr. Dan Ohmann

## MARYKNOLL INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES



Academically Affiliated  
with  
Saint Mary's University  
of Minnesota / USA  
and  
Tangaza College  
Nairobi, Kenya



<http://www.mias.edu>

**learning** from native speakers

Makoko Language School, Musoma, Tanzania

<http://swahilimakoko.110mb.com>

Remember to check our African Region Website regularly for updates and new information:

[www.MaryknollAfrica.org](http://www.MaryknollAfrica.org)

## Call for Articles for Our Next Issue

**Date:** July 2011

**Theme:** Africa Celebrates Maryknoll's 100th Anniversary

**Material to Editor by:** 1 June 2011

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, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya (for scanning into a computer).