

MARYKNOLL HISTORY IN AFRICA PART EIGHT

MARYKNOLL IN NIGERIA AND NAMIBIA

INTRODUCTION

In Africa, Maryknoll had always worked in eastern Africa and Egypt, which was considered part of the Middle East Unit, and despite having looked at the possibility of sending a Unit to Mali in the 1970s never assigned any personnel to either west or southern Africa. Beginning in 1990 this changed, with the assignments of priests and Brothers to first Nigeria and later to Namibia. These assignments did not occur as a result of Maryknoll seeking out and doing research on other places in Africa but rather to the personal initiative of first Fr. Dick Albertine and later other Maryknollers who joined him in Namibia. In the late 1970s and early 1980s several members of Maryknoll's General Council had been encouraging the Africa Regions to seriously look into working in other parts of Africa, particularly southern Africa such as South Africa and Zimbabwe. However, finding sufficient personnel for the new Mission Units in Sudan, Ethiopia and Zambia was proving difficult enough, and as more and more Maryknollers were choosing to move to Kenya, there was insufficient support and interest for a move to southern Africa.

Albertine was the only Maryknoller to be stationed in Nigeria and his stay there was brief, two years only. However, mission to Namibia has proven to be more long-lasting, from 1998 to the present, has had as many as six Maryknollers there at a time, and is even considered one of the priorities for the Africa Region.

Nigeria: St. Paul Mission Seminary

In January, 1990, Fr. Dick Albertine was working at Maryknoll, New York, for the Education and Formation Department, when a letter arrived from the Kiltegan Society (formal name: St. Patrick Missionary Society), which had just opened a major seminary for the new missionary society they had started in Nigeria. This society, called the St. Paul Missionary Society, had already ordained a number of priests who were serving in other parts of Africa, in Europe and even in Russia. They had about 100 major seminarians and decided they could open their own major seminary, but they needed priests to serve on the faculty. Unfortunately, there was no potential seminary professor in Maryknoll available to go to Nigeria at that time. Albertine had worked in Venezuela for many years and was preparing to return there within a year or so. However, he considered the building up of indigenous church institutions, particularly through good academic formation in the seminary, to be one of Maryknoll's priorities and he decided that he would offer to go to Nigeria.

He talked with Fr. Ken Thesing, the liaison for Africa on the General Council and who was to become the Superior General at the end of 1990, who agreed that Albertine could make a three-year commitment to this new seminary. Albertine immediately began seeking a Nigerian work visa and making other preparations to live there, and by July of

1990 he was ready to go. On arrival in Nigeria he spent six weeks in Lagos, the former capital and the country's largest city, getting to know the Catholic Church in Nigeria.

Lagos is one of the world's mega-cities, is very densely populated, and is notorious not only for rampant corruption but also for its horrendous, day-long traffic gridlock. Nigeria is the largest country in Africa, population-wise, with 149 million people in 2010, according to the United Nations. In 1990, when Albertine went to Nigeria, there were about 100 million, but the country's growth rate has averaged about three percent since then, although in recent years this has dropped to below 2.5%. Because of the density and squalor of Lagos and the need to choose a national capital in a neutral part of the country, the small town of Abuja in central Nigeria was chosen in the 1970s to be the new capital. After many delays in building this planned city, it was officially made the capital on December 12, 1991. Abuja is also the headquarters of ECOWAS and the regional headquarters of OPEC. Its population has mushroomed to 780,000 today and it too is plagued with daily traffic jams.

Two overriding issues affect most everything in Nigeria: oil and ethnicity.

Oil production accounts for a major percentage of Gross Domestic Product, which at \$374 billion in 2010 put it in 31st place worldwide, and crude oil accounts for 95% of annual exports of about \$45 billion. Nigeria exports 2.2 million barrels of oil daily and is the fifth largest source of oil imports into the U.S. Because of oil, Nigeria had an economic growth rate in 2010 of 7.8% and a per capita income of \$2,500. However, these statistics cover up other alarming facts: inflation is rampant to the extent that adjusted for inflation, per capita income is lower today than in 1960; 45% of the population live below the poverty level; and agricultural and industrial production has suffered due to dependency on oil income. Nigeria used to export food; now it has to import food. And oil production's role in environmental damage, ruination of indigenous societies, and fueling of persistent violence in the Niger River Delta area of southeastern Nigeria has been well reported.

The "curse of oil" has received good explanations in two recent books: "Untapped: The Scramble for Africa's Oil," by John Ghasvinian, (published by Harcourt, Inc., 2007), and "The Greatest Story Oversold: Understanding Economic Globalization," by Stan G. Duncan (published by Orbis Books, 2010). Ghazvinian writes:

The "curse of oil" is a term that has become hugely fashionable in recent years among those concerned about poverty reduction and the effect of resource booms on developing countries... They have argued that it can take many forms, from the exacerbation of preexisting armed conflict to the encouragement of corruption to the neglect of traditional industries and agriculture... Certainly, in Nigeria, oil wealth has brought endemic conflict. But for a growing number of activists and NGOs, the real "curse" of oil is not political or military instability, but economic degradation.

That oil wealth could be a curse seems counterintuitive... However, studies suggest that real GDP and the population's standard of living nearly always decline where oil is discovered. Between 1970 and 1993, for example, countries without oil saw their economies grow four times faster than those of countries with oil. (Ghasvinian, page 95)

This term is also known as the “Dutch Disease” and the “Norway Curse,” as similar economic structural problems developed in the countries of Netherlands and Norway after discoveries of huge sources respectively of natural gas and oil. Being European countries, with large, diversified economies, they were eventually able to counteract the negative structural effects of the domestic economy “becoming suddenly overreliant on one type of export commodity, usually an extracted natural resource.” However, Nigeria and other African countries with large resources of oil, such as Gabon, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, and to lesser extents Cameroon and Ivory Coast, have not fared well at all.

This glut of foreign exchange artificially inflates the value of the country’s own currency, which means that suddenly imported products become much cheaper and everyone rushes out to buy foreign goods, which are perceived (usually accurately) to be of better quality than domestic products.

It appears the country has become rich overnight, but cassava farmers and goat herders find fewer people will buy their products. (They) abandon their failing rural livelihoods and flock to the cities, where they have heard there is big money to be made. Once there, however, they end up selling cigarette lighters and sticks of gum on the street or, if they are lucky, driving taxicabs.

Ghasvinian’s book goes on to explain that:

Mass urban migration devastates the country’s traditional farms and small cottage industries; life in the big cities becomes increasingly reliant on expensive foreign food; the new urban arrivals find themselves dependent on government handouts and international food aid; and a country that was once a regional breadbasket and net exporter of food can quickly turn into one that is unable to feed itself. (Ghasvinian, pp 96-97)

Stan Duncan, in his book (pp 66-67), adds:

Nigeria was an early beneficiary of the oil production boom of the early 1970s, but at the same time saw its agricultural exports drop from 11.2% of GDP in 1968 to 2.8% in 1972. That is a serious collapse, from which the country has yet to recover.

New money also often brings corruption and waste. Nigeria became the world’s largest importer of champagne, with gold bathtubs not far behind. It is estimated that in the 1970s one-eighth of the world’s merchant fleet was waiting offshore to unload imports, usually of luxury items.

In 1975, politicians ordered 20 million tons of cement, enough to build an entire city. They paid for it out of government funds at hugely inflated prices and then received the difference between the inflated and actual price as kickbacks. When questions were raised, the buildings containing government records mysteriously burned to the ground.

Ethnicity is the other source of conflict, enflamed further by religious differences. Three ethnic groups account for over two-thirds of the population, even though there are over 250 ethnic groups in the country. The Hausa-Fulani, overwhelmingly Muslim, live in the north and have 29% of the population; the Yoruba, half Christian, a quarter Muslim and a quarter following traditional beliefs, make up 21% and live in the southwest; and the Igbo, predominantly Christian and very strongly Catholic, have 18% of the population and live in the southeast. If the Ijaw, the fourth largest ethnic group, who are closely aligned with the Igbo, are added to the list, then these four large ethnic groups account for three-fourths of the population. Nationally, 50.4% of the population is Muslim and 48.2% is Christian (as exact statistics these are certainly questionable, but they probably point in the correct direction). Politics revolves around rotating leadership between Muslims and Christians, knowing that political office bestows access to income from oil royalties.

The Catholic Church is very well established in Nigeria. There are fifty-two dioceses in all, of which nine are Archdioceses. Cardinal Francis Arinze, who has been stationed in Rome for over a decade, is a Nigerian. The Archbishop of Lagos, Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, is also a Cardinal. There are about ten major seminaries in the country and many priests have gone to other countries, including to the United States.

The seminary to which Albertine went in 1990 is the National Missionary Seminary of St. Paul, located in a small town about thirty miles west of Abuja called Gwagwalada. In 1990 there were 100 seminarians in St. Paul, with many more foreseen from a network of minor seminaries, providing rationale for starting this new seminary. Albertine commented about this assignment:

My going to Nigeria was sort of serendipitous, as I had not been planning or thinking of going to Africa. But Ken Thesing's brother was a Dominican, who have a place near St. Paul's, and we both thought that helping this new seminary was a good thing.

Another reason why I considered it worthwhile for me to go to Africa was my long mission work in Venezuela. Venezuela is an African-based culture, unlike many other countries in Latin America which are based on indigenous Indian cultures. We were also just starting to go to Brazil at that time and part of the initial difficulties we were having there was not realizing that Brazil is also greatly an African-based culture.

When Albertine arrived at the seminary he was thrown into a heavy load of teaching as there were not enough professors at first. The Kiltegan Society also wanted the seminary accredited, which Albertine advocated be done in an orderly, systematic way. The Nigerian government also notified the seminary at the same time of the importance of beginning a rigorous accreditation procedure.

Albertine then made a suggestion that was well received and acted on by the seminary.

I recommended that they choose one of their best Nigerian Kiltegan priests to go to Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago for a semester or a year, be an understudy of the dean at CTU, and then come back to St. Paul's and

shepherd the process of accreditation. I foresaw that it would be a five or six-year process and that it was important that one of their own lead this.

I also felt that I would be in the way if I remained after this priest came back. So, I shortened my stay in Nigeria to only two years. But in that time I helped fix up the library and make connections with the local university, also in Gwagwalada. This was very satisfying, although getting things done in Nigeria is extremely difficult. So, my contributions were modest.

Since it was a new missionary society and the seminary was a fledgling institution, the quality of the seminarians was mixed. Albertine felt that some of the men should not have been accepted but that others were of very good quality. He was especially concerned about the quality of the large numbers who were potentially coming from the minor (i.e. high school) seminaries (seven minor seminaries had about 500 seminarians, although not all would go to the major seminary). Thus, Albertine felt that in addition to improving academics it was also imperative that the seminaries install an excellent formation program. The diocesan major seminary, which had already achieved good academic standing, was also in need of better formation, according to Albertine, a recommendation that he made to the Bishops' Conference. Whether his recommendation had any influence is unknown but Albertine thinks that seminary formation definitely improved beginning later in the 1990s and up to the present.

St. Paul's Seminary was eventually accredited, both locally in Nigeria and by the Vatican, and has sent priests all over the world. When Albertine later went to Namibia he met some of his former students in South Africa and Namibia, although one of them was tragically killed in an auto accident in South Africa. In the United States, Albertine says, their priests are in Texas, Oregon and one or two other places.

After leaving Nigeria Albertine returned to the United States and did Promotion work up till 1997, booking by phone hundreds of parishes in which Maryknoll was able to make appeals for financial support and encourage American Catholics to learn of the Church's mission efforts through reading the Maryknoll Magazine.

Namibia

Namibia is a huge, dry, sun-drenched country, the most sparsely populated country in all of Africa, with only 6.7 people per square mile and growing at only one percent per year (for now; because of HIV/AIDS it is projected to lose twelve percent of its population by the year 2050), bracketed on the east by the Kalahari Desert and on the west by the Namib Desert, possibly the driest desert in the world, and divided almost in half by the Tropic of Cancer, giving the southern third of the country a larger range of temperature swings even if not a winter season (compared for instance to New York's winter). Its capital city, Windhoek, at 5,600 feet in altitude gets quite cool in July, however, and avoids snow only thanks to its aridity.

The far north, which has a tropical climate of very warm temperatures, wooded terrain and sufficient rainfall, is the most densely populated part of Namibia, except for the cities, enabling Bantu peoples to practice subsistence farming and settled herding of

cattle, sheep and goats. The two largest ethnic groups live in the north, the Ovambo with just under fifty percent of the country's population and the Kavango with just under ten percent.

The central/southern grasslands constitute most of the country's area and are very suitable for extensive sheep-ranching, although cattle can be ranched in some areas. Khoisan peoples, the Nama and Damara, migrated into this area from what is today South Africa and Botswana beginning two thousand years ago and later vied with the Herero, a Bantu people who migrated from the East African Great Lakes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for control of the grasslands. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, most of this land was forcibly taken by German and South African White settlers who established sheep ranches of ten thousand to fifty thousand acres. In the 1890s the Nama resisted this expropriation of their lands in what is called the "Hottentot Uprising," but in 1894 the Nama leader made peace with the German Governor, Theodor Leitwein, who tried to practice what he called "colonialism without bloodshed."

In 1905, however, in what is officially termed the Herero and Namaqua Genocide, over fifty percent of the Herero and Nama people were directly killed by 15,000 German troops – often by poisoning the few sources of water the Herero/Nama had access to in the marginal lands to which they had fled. This conflict had been sparked in 1904 when the Herero killed 150 German settlers in remote rural farms, and was followed by Germany sending a more brutal Governor, Lothar von Trotha, who showed no mercy. Since the middle of the twentieth century the African populations have come back and today the Herero, Damara and Nama make up twenty percent of Namibia's population, although the lands on which they raise their herds are not prime grasslands.

The first White settlers were German, who by 1910 numbered 13,000. It was not only prospects for good ranching that attracted them but also the mineral wealth of Namibia, especially after gem-class diamonds were discovered in large quantities in 1908. Today Whites make up 6.4% of the population, about 138,000 people, and are predominantly of South African, German and to a much less extent British origin. Sixty percent of Namibian Whites speak only Afrikaans whereas only seven percent speak English as a first language, which since Independence has been the national language.

The San (Bushmen) were the original inhabitants of Namibia, well over two thousand years ago, but today have only 2.9% of the population and live primarily in the northeast where the Kalahari Desert begins. A similar number of San live in Botswana, but their age-old hunter-gatherer way of life may be rapidly disappearing.

Two other interesting but relatively small groups moved from South Africa into central Namibia in the nineteenth century, the Oorlams, a Khoisan people who spoke Afrikaans and followed Boer customs and who settled at what is today Windhoek, and the Basters, descendants of Boer men and Nama women, who were Calvinist and spoke Afrikaans. The Basters have always considered themselves White, although in South Africa they would probably be classified as Colored. (Racial classifications seem far more important in South African than in modern Namibia.) The Basters founded the city of Rehoboth about 55 miles south of Windhoek. Windhoek today is a beautiful, multi-racial city with an enviable climate. At Independence in 1990 it was still quite small, fewer than 100,000 but was estimated in 2010 to have over 300,000, perhaps as many as 350,000 (the official census figure for 2001 was 233,529).

The history of Namibia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of course, is of the colonization by Germany, beginning in 1884, followed by the transfer of administrative control to South Africa in 1918 by the League of Nations, which was later renewed by the United Nations in 1946, although with the caveat that South Africa promote the material and social progress of the African peoples. South Africa consistently resisted UN efforts to grant full independence and majority rule to Namibia over the next forty-three years, instead seeking to make it (called at that time South West Africa) South Africa's fifth province and in 1975 promoting an "internal settlement," dividing up Namibia into a large White area and nine Bantustans, similar to what existed in South Africa. In 1959, when South African troops forcibly removed Black residents of the city of Windhoek to the township of Katutura, close to ten miles away, killing eleven protesters in the process, the Namibian War of Independence began. The political party SWAPO (South-West Africa People's Organization) set up a military wing called PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia), which primarily operated out of bases in southern Angola and was dominated by the Ovambo people.

In 1971 the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa's presence in Namibia was illegal and the UN ordered all its member states to neither recognize nor support South Africa. In 1978 the UN's Security Council passed Resolution 435, which mandated that elections be held under UN supervision. This was defied by South Africa, which held unilateral elections in 1978, boycotted by SWAPO. In the 1980s the UN put more pressure on South Africa, sending in succession four different commissioners to Namibia, one of whom, Martti Ahtisaari, in 1982 got a set of Constitutional Principles agreed to by the front-line States, SWAPO, and the Western Contact Group. However, independence was delayed primarily by the United States' policy of "constructive engagement," formulated by the Reagan Administration. The U.S. was more interested in pursuing its proxy war against Soviet and Cuban troops stationed in Angola than in promoting independence in Namibia.

It was only finally in 1988 that Reagan and the Soviet Union's President Gorbachev came to an agreement about Angola that led to the breakthrough. Intensive discussions had taken place in London throughout the year 1988 between all the parties concerned with Namibia, which resulted in the Brazzaville Protocol of December 22, 1988, a tripartite agreement between Angola, Cuba and South Africa. This agreement stipulated that Cuba would withdraw its troops from Angola, the Soviet Union would end aid to Angola, and in return South Africa would completely withdraw from Namibia and hand over control to the UN, leading to elections at the end of 1989. Matters proceeded fairly smoothly in 1989, with the exceptions of an incursion into northern Namibia by PLAN troops, which were ordered by the UN to return to Angola, and the continued operations in northern Namibia of Koevoet (crowbar) a 1,600 member South African paramilitary unit, which was ordered to be demobilized under UN supervision. Finally, in November, 1989, 98% of registered voters voted, giving 57% of the vote to SWAPO. Namibia became independent on March 21, 1990, with Sam Nujoma its first President.

Namibia has remained a stable, peaceful democracy since then, with perhaps the only exception being Nujoma's revision of the constitution in 1998, permitting him to run for a third term in 1999. However, in 2004 he willingly stepped down from the Presidency and handed over this office in 2005 to Hifikepunye Pohamba, who is also a member of SWAPO.

The largest social challenge in Namibia is the enormous income gap between the wealthy and the poor, perhaps the largest income disparity in the world. Despite a per capita income of over \$6,000 a year, thirty-five percent earn less than \$1.00 per day and fifty-six percent earn less than \$2.00 a day. Whites and the top one percent of Black Namibians in fact have an average per capita income of over \$20,000 per year, whereas the lowest forty percent have an average per capita income of around \$100 a year. Half of the population is still engaged in subsistence farming whereas only three percent of the labor force is employed in the lucrative mining sector. In addition to diamonds, Namibia produces uranium (the world's fifth largest producer), lead, zinc, tin, silver and tungsten, and is Africa's fourth largest exporter of nonfuel minerals. Conversely, despite its agricultural potential, particularly in the north, the nation has to import fifty percent of its cereal requirements.

Unemployment is also a serious problem, in part due to capital-intensive modes of industry and farming and in part due to an inferior education system. Fewer than half the labor force is employed in the formal sector and in fact the formal employment sector has seen a decrease from 400,000 in 1997 to only 330,000 in 2008. Improving the education standards has been a priority for the independent government, but progress has been slow. One factor in this was the abrupt change in 1990 from Afrikaans to English as the language of all schools from primary on up. Few teachers knew English in the 1990s. The government has tried hard to update teachers in English and to retire older staff, who can be replaced by young teachers trained in English. Most children now attend primary school but fewer than fifty percent attend secondary school, slightly more girls than boys.

Despite a rather brutal colonial history, Namibia is, at least in theory, a predominantly Christian country. Over eighty percent of the people consider themselves Christian and at least fifty percent are Lutheran. According to Catholic diocesan figures, about eighteen percent of the country is Catholic, although the Church is still very much dependent on expatriate personnel. The first missionaries were Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) from Germany, who arrived in 1896 and had established by 1905 missions in central and southern parts of Namibia. Gaining a foothold in the north was more difficult; after seven failed attempts OMI missionaries finally founded the Nyangana Mission in 1910, the parish to which Maryknoll Brothers went in the 2006.

A major contribution that the German missionaries made was the establishment in the sheep-ranching areas of large boarding schools, from kindergarten to the end of primary school and in some cases through secondary school, to which the children of African ranch workers could go. (Children of the White ranchers go to expensive private schools in South Africa, perpetuating not only income disparities but also internalized attitudes of racial superiority/inferiority.) The ranches are scattered so far afield and workers so few on each ranch that it is not possible to have schools at any ranch. The facilities at the Catholic schools, which are free for every student, are excellent, as is the quality of education. Dormitories for each age and gender group are supervised by house mothers, who are hired by the missions and who receive on-going training in their tasks.

The top objective of the Namibian Catholic Church is to create an indigenous led Church, primarily through its national major seminary in Windhoek. In 2010 there were sixty-one religious order priests in Namibia, some of whom were Namibian Africans, but only seventeen diocesan priests – of whom a total of only five were in the outlying dioceses of Rundu (in the north) and Keetmanshoop (in the south). The three Bishops are

all members of the OMI order, although two of them are Namibian, including Archbishop Liborius Nashenda of Windhoek.

The lack of development of this fledgling church is what attracted Dick Albertine and other Maryknoll priests and Brothers to Namibia, beginning in 1998, since assisting with the establishment of a young mission church is one of Maryknoll's foremost criteria. The Bishops themselves have been actively seeking more personnel, not only from the Oblates but other mission societies, and none more so than Archbishop Bonifatius Haushiku, who was the ordinary of Windhoek from 1980 until his sudden death on June 12, 2002, and who issued the invitations, first to the Maryknoll Sisters and then to the Fathers and Brothers. About a half dozen Maryknoll Sisters went to Namibia just a few years after Independence in 1990 and have remained there up till now. The Namibian church and the society in general have many needs, enabling each Maryknoller to focus on his or her skill area. Unfortunately, the Maryknoll Sisters were not interviewed for this history, a void which needs to be filled in another publication. Here we will look at what the six priests and Brothers have done for the past twelve years.

Archdiocese of Windhoek

National Major Seminary

After finishing up in Nigeria in 1992, Fr. Dick Albertine returned to the United States to work for the Promotion Department and also look after his aged parents. Since booking of Maryknoll appeals in parishes was done by phone, he was able to live at home and do his phone calls from there. In 1996 both his parents died, freeing Albertine to look for another mission assignment overseas. He had previously worked in Venezuela for many years and could have gone back there, but several factors came into play that made him also look to an assignment in Africa. The theme of liberation had become prominent in southern Africa in the 1980s and was still relevant in the 1990s, as South Africa had only just elected Nelson Mandela president in 1994. While Albertine was in Nigeria in 1991, the priest who had been the founder of the LUMKO Institute in South Africa visited and talked with Albertine. This priest said that if reconciliation can be done in South Africa then it can be done anywhere, a statement that further piqued Albertine's interest in work in southern Africa.

The need for post-Apartheid reconciliation equally applied to Namibia, where Maryknoll Sisters had gone in the mid-1990s, as Albertine was aware. Thus, when he met MM Sr. Anastasia Lott in Los Angeles in early 1998, who told him that she was going to Namibia, and that the Bishops of Namibia were starting a diocesan major seminary and were looking for assistance to staff the seminary, Albertine immediately made the decision to write to Archbishop Haushiku in Windhoek. The latter promptly responded, saying "Come. I will make you rector of the seminary." Albertine declined this offer, but did go to Windhoek in 1998, joining the staff at the seminary.

Albertine explained in an interview that there were multiple reasons for his decision to go to Namibia.

As was the case when I went to Nigeria, I felt that there was a real connection between Africa and some of the countries of South America that have

large populations originally from Africa. The need to assist a country just emerging from the apartheid experience was another draw.

Probably the biggest reason was the lack of ecclesial development in the Namibian Church. Even now my American benefactors are amazed to hear that there are fewer than twenty Namibian priests in the whole country, since there are African priests now going to work in the United States.

After arriving at the newly started seminary in mid or late 1988, Albertine discovered that there were only 33 seminarians in the whole seminary, a four-year institution. He further discovered that a good number of them were not at a sufficient academic standard for tertiary-level education and that some did not have a true priestly vocation. Operating such a small seminary, with prospects for so few priests, seemed questionable. On the advice of Maryknoll Sister Imelda Batista, who was the liaison between the Archbishop and the Ministry of Education, Albertine took on the additional job of being part-time chaplain at the University of Namibia, which had no Catholic Chaplain at that time. Batista stated that it was not certain that the major seminary would survive and thought that Albertine should have another ministry in Windhoek. Albertine explained about the politics of post-Apartheid Namibia and its desire to appear fully independent.

I had questions about the viability of the seminary when I arrived and did not really understand it. But I went to South Africa a couple of times and they regarded us as country bumpkins. Previously there were only two Bishops in Namibia, who were members of the South Africa Bishops Conference, and they were basically ignored by the Conference. Even politically it was the same thing. Namibia had been illegally annexed by South Africa, which kept its hold on Namibia for such a long time, but considered it just a footnote. So the Bishops of Namibia decided they had to set up their own Bishops Conference and their own seminary. The same thing was true of Botswana. Fortunately, however, there is now a move afoot to combine the Bishops Conferences of Namibia and Botswana and maybe one or two other small countries.

The feasibility, though, of such a small seminary was very shaky. We had only two, three or five in a theology class; it was almost like a tutorial, which had certain benefits. Combined with this was the lack of a vocation program in the country. There was one priest who had money and was forwarding candidates from the byways and crossroads of the country, but with no proper discernment. These were fellows who could not possibly qualify for the university, not even for a Teachers Training College. They didn't have the marks to get into the seminary. I was also university chaplain and university students asked me how some of these seminarians could have got into the seminary. I wrote to the Bishops and to the Nuncio complaining that "this is the only country I know where the standards for the seminary are not even at high school level."

Another problem was that several Oblates (OMIs) were involved with vocations and they took the best diocesan candidates to their Oblate seminary in South Africa.

I endured this up till 2003 and did the best I could. My best contribution was to keep rogues out of the priesthood. I also did my best in providing a solid academic foundation to those few who did get ordained. Two of our students went to South Africa for the standardized tests and shocked the South Africans by ending up in the top three or so.

In 2003 I wrote to the Bishops Conference, saying that they have to put in academic standards and a proper vocational program. I then resigned from the seminary and became the full-time chaplain at the university. To the Bishops' credit, they accepted my criticism although they have been slow acting on it.

After resigning from the seminary Albertine seriously considered leaving Namibia for good. He had always been intrigued with the possibility of working in Cuba – a country which also has strong cultural connections with Africa – and took a sabbatical in Cuba in 2003 to 2004. Prior to this he had been put on the board of the National Catholic AIDS Action, which was instrumental in bringing MM Fr. Rick Bauer from Tanzania to Namibia to be the Director of this organization (c.f. below) and had also joined the board of a civic organization to work with former prison inmates that had just been formed (in 2003). When Bauer came to Namibia Albertine moved out of the seminary and moved into a large apartment in Windhoek. He then went to Cuba and did not expect to return to Namibia. Things changed, however.

After I returned from Cuba in 2004 I gave notice to Archbishop Nashenda that I was leaving, but he pleaded with me to stay for at least three more years. Then I also got sick. This sickness made me realize that I probably would not be able to handle the tropical heat of Cuba nor its food and other things. Windhoek has a much healthier climate. So, I made a decision to remain in Windhoek and I am here more or less permanently now.

Albertine remains in that same apartment as of mid-2011, although Bauer moved out of it after just a year or two, to his own apartment closer to the Catholic Hospital. Albertine's apartment has three bedrooms on the second (top) floor, sufficient for two residents and one guest, and ample living space on the ground floor. Electricity, water, television reception and internet connections are no problem. There is no heat in the apartment; in July people just use extra woolen blankets.

After Albertine left the seminary a team of Carmelite priests from India were given responsibility for staffing the seminary. The former rector of the seminary is now the Secretary General of the Bishops' Conference and one of the Carmelites is the rector. Albertine thinks that matters are slowly getting better, as all those involved gain greater understanding of how to operate a small major seminary in a country lacking good schools and in a church lacking sufficient faith formation. However, even by 2010 the seminary remained very small, only thirty to forty students in the whole seminary in a given year.

Albertine was not the final Maryknoll priest to teach at the major seminary. In 2008 Fr. Ed Shellito came to Windhoek to set up programs in counseling and addictions therapy. After having extensive experience in these areas in the Philippines for about ten

years, Shellito had gone to Loyola College near Baltimore, MD, from 2004 to 2007, to get a Masters Degree in Counseling. In 2007 he made the decision not to return to the Philippines, which had many local people trained in these fields, and visited several countries, including Kenya in East Africa, looking for a suitable place to utilize his skills. He was readily welcomed to come to Namibia, where he went in mid-2008. After concentrating on setting up programs and an office on the grounds of the Cathedral and starting a counseling service at the Catholic Hospital in Windhoek (these programs will be written about below), he was approached in 2009 by the rector of the seminary to teach a course in pastoral counseling, which is needed for accreditation for the seminary. Shellito began teaching this course in 2010.

I teach all four years together in one class, which comes to only about ten students in the class. This course requires a lot of work and preparation, but I enjoy teaching. However, it is difficult since I don't get much positive feedback from the students, although I think this reticence is a part of Namibian culture.

In part connected with his teaching role, Archbishop Nashenda asked Shellito to also organize a program of ongoing education for the Namibian diocesan priests. He explains how this came about.

We don't have many Namibian priests here but most of them have problems of one kind or another. This has led to the suspension or removal from ministry of four of them. I visited each of them to see if I could be of assistance, despite warnings from older clergy that they would not talk to me, since I am a foreigner.

They had no problem talking with me, partly because I have developed a skill at listening. But their problem was not with foreigners, but with authority. I was able to present myself as a foreigner without authority. But we will see how this goes.

In any event, when the Archbishop saw that there were some positive results occurring he asked me to organize a course in ongoing education for the clergy. This, too, I am going about slowly.

Shellito has continued teaching at the seminary, although he does not live there (the Maryknoll apartment, in which he lives with Albertine, is only a quick ten-minute drive from the seminary). His full-time ministries are in counseling and addictions recovery.

The discoveries by Albertine and Shellito of the myriad difficulties facing the indigenous Namibian Church's road to maturity are sobering. Hopefully, this Church will get the professional assistance it needs. There are three places it can look: within the wider Namibian society itself, from overseas, and perhaps to a greater extent from the South African Church, which has many more resources. The universal Catholic Church also needs to look at its own internal structures and discern if more rapid reform is required in countries where it can be foreseen that the clerical structure will not meet the needs of the Christian community.

Chaplain, University of Namibia

Father Dick Albertine had been invited to Namibia in 1998 by the Archbishop of Windhoek to work solely in the newly started national major seminary. However, Maryknoll Sisters had been in the country for several years prior to his arrival, and one of them, Sister Imelda Batista, talked with Albertine, cautioning him that it was not certain that the seminary, with only a few students, would survive. She recommended that he take on another task as well, at the relatively new national university, which did not have a Catholic Chaplain. She was the Archbishop's representative to the Ministry of Education and was also on the President's Commission for Revamping Education. As a result she had good inside knowledge of what the most pertinent educational needs were in Namibia. Albertine accepted her advice and became part-time university chaplain, beginning in 1999.

Prior to Independence in 1990 there were very few educated Black Namibians available. They had to study outside of the country, a few in western universities, but most in eastern Europe, Russia or China. The university here was originally a teachers' college, which the independent government upgraded to a university for the same reason as the Bishops Conference had for starting a national major seminary – to gain a sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency.

It's been slow going but it is coming along. In 2008 an engineering department was started and now this year (2010) a medical school was begun, the first medical school ever in Namibia. Some of the best students in Namibia go to South Africa or elsewhere, since UNAM, as it's called, has not yet established a solid reputation. But it is taking poor students from all over the country and turning them into what is in essence the first generation of an indigenous, educated, professional class.

When I first started, the students had experience of life under apartheid, but now, in 2010, we are getting a new generation who have known only independence. The difference is not so much, except that today's students take for granted their right to a university education. In fact, because of the history of apartheid I thought that being a foreigner I would run into a stony politeness, or maybe even some snide remarks such as "Get out of our university," but they have been very grateful, universally polite and affirming.

There are 10,000 students in the university, of which 1,800 are Catholic, at least as far as statistics go – only about 200 to 300 actually participate in Catholic events. I am chaplain not only at the university but also at the College of Education and at the agricultural school, although most of my time is spent at the university. The Polytechnic also needs a Catholic Chaplain, but that would be too much for me.

Although his primary tasks are religious, to conduct liturgies and help the students grow in their faith, he has had to take on a broader role.

I do have to help students occasionally, for a one-time, specific purpose. Even though they have bursaries for tuition and some meals, an occasional student has had nothing to eat, or another needs transport to go home. And the university administration knows that I don't discriminate, that is that they don't have to be Catholic.

The students want someone to talk with and they have opened their hearts to me. I don't have an office; I just sit in a corner of the cafeteria and students come to talk. They talk about anything: family, answers for abortion, relationships, girls being beat up, and so forth. So I have become both a social worker and a counselor, two things sorely lacking here at the university. And that I am undertaking these roles is known throughout the administration, right up to the Vice-Chancellor, who is the actual day-to-day head of the university.

These social problems tie in to the faith formation that I am trying to facilitate. We use a form of retreat begun in the U.S., which for many of our students is the first initiation into an experiential mode of faith. Students who come here have almost zero catechetical formation, just maybe goodwill. Liturgically, I do many things with them, such as the way of the cross sitting on the grass, or faith-enrichment forums, and other things like this.

I have a background in economics and am able to challenge the things they are learning or ask them questions about the connection between their education and Namibian society. They have come to respect that there is a content to religion and that societal development is a part of the Kingdom of God. I am trying to orient them to see that the life of a professional is not in contradiction to the life of a person of faith.

Sunday Mass at the university, conducted in a large room, not a chapel, and as presided over by Albertine, follows on the same overall theme of connecting liturgy and the word of God to the lived situation of the students. The student choir leads a spectacular celebration, in which all participate. Generally there are over one hundred in attendance and it can go up to two hundred, admittedly just a small percentage of the Catholics on campus. More women attend Mass, although both the young men and women active in Mass are committed to their faith. A small percentage of students at UNAM are from Zambia and almost all of them are Catholic. Thus, the Catholic congregation on Sundays has a large minority of Zambians. A few other Catholics are from Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Albertine has developed good relations with other faculty members and those in administration, although none of them ever comes to the students' Mass – unless it is a special occasion at which the Bishop comes to say Mass.

The Vice-Chancellor is a very good Catholic, as are some of the other faculty members. But it is against their cultural norms to have the professional class fraternize with the students.

Lack of an office and other Catholic facilities is an impediment, according to Albertine.

When I first came here I was offered an office, but declined as it would have led to bad relations with the Protestant chaplains, who were not offered the same space. But we do need office space, a place for meeting and catechetics, and our own chapel would help. The Benedictine Abbott, an American, told me that there is money available in Europe to build these facilities and it is probably time that we do this.

There are some problems with this. I am a foreigner and getting up in years, and also a Catholic in an Afrikaner culture, which could create problems. Furthermore, I don't know anything about building, so someone with good knowledge of construction would have to oversee the building. Another problem is that the university wants the money to be channeled through the administration, which I would not agree to.

So, I will have to go to Archbishop Nashenda and ask him to take charge of this. He should also assign a Namibian priest to be Chaplain, whom I could assist. This way the construction will be a truly Namibian endeavor. And we should have a Namibian Chaplain by now.

Having a Namibian priest as Chaplain would also free up more time for Albertine to carry out another aspect of his chaplaincy duties, meeting with the graduates, many of whom are struggling to find jobs and survive in Namibia's economy.

Getting a job here is ferociously difficult. The year after they graduate from the university comes as a shock to the students. They think they are going to walk into a well-paying job and that doesn't happen. I have been counseling graduates and meeting with them, such as in restaurants and such. This is a whole other apostolate I could do, if we had a Namibian priest here.

Our graduates, however, have done a lot for the Namibian Catholic Church. They are doing more pastoral work with the young people than the missions are. For instance, I recently met with the former chairman of our Catholic Association and he has started an association in the north that helps train teachers in religious knowledge. Our Catholic graduates are at every level of society and making a positive contribution.

Albertine feels that Namibia could be a perfect place for an older Maryknoller to come for six or so years. In 2003, when he considered leaving Namibia, he realized several things. First, given Windhoek's healthy climate, relative safety, and the ease of traveling around (no traffic jams, unlike in other African cities) made Namibia a congenial place for an older Maryknoller to live. Additionally, the glaring need to develop an indigenous Catholic Church lent itself to an older missionary who would like to take on the role of mentoring for six or so years, which is how Albertine most aptly describes his own role. He likewise had been put on several boards, which showed him how deficient both Namibian society and the Namibian Church are in qualified personnel. An experienced missionary, no matter what his expertise, would readily find many areas in which he could make a needed contribution – and in a church setting which was actively seeking and showing appreciation for overseas missionaries. As English is the

national medium, language would not be a problem for an American missionary. Thus, Albertine not only stayed in Namibia himself but he strongly advocates that Maryknollers from other parts of the world consider working in Namibia.

With regard to the two boards that he worked on, Albertine explains:

In 1998 Sr./Dr. Raphaela Handler from Germany and Dr. Lucy Steinitz, a Jewish woman, started an organization which is now called the National Catholic AIDS Action and in 2002 I was asked to be on the board. This is now huge, with a budget of about five or six million U.S. dollars a year, and maybe we moved too quickly. AIDS had by then reached critical proportions and there was no AIDS organization around. Sister said to me, "We need someone with a more pastoral vision." So I contacted Rick Bauer, who came and gave a series of six conferences attended by two-thirds of the priests of Namibia, including all the Bishops. Archbishop Nashenda was there every minute.

Rick had been directing the Catholic AIDS program in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for some years and was in 2002 in the process of turning over leadership to others. That is how he came here to Windhoek.

Then in 2003 a woman who was the former deputy minister of prisons and who had denounced torture in prisons was starting an organization to assist former prison inmates and she asked me to be on the board. It took us a year to form the organization, but it has done a lot of good.

Namibia has nothing in terms of rehabilitation. People coming out of prisons were stigmatized and would find their way back into gangs and so forth. The country was just recycling prisoners. This attitude towards prisoners dates back to apartheid. In those days you went to jail and there was no question of rehabilitation. The attitude was that the prisoner got what he deserved.

The woman who started this had the confidence of the prisoners, because of the stance she had taken against her own ministry. She also had good contacts in the government and in a year she got the organization accredited. I was the only Catholic on the board, and naturally the only priest, among a group who were all either Afrikaner or German. So, I felt honored.

When these guys come out of prison, which are terrible places, ours is the only organization reaching out to them. They register with us and we offer courses, such as computer-type courses, counseling and other types of assistance towards being reintegrated into society. I never had any problem with any of them. They live in a sacred universe and are very docile towards a priest. Of course, we are strict; one fault and they are out. One man did bring in a knife and threatened a staff member, so he was immediately out.

Our rehabilitation rate, like most countries, is relatively low, but there is a glimmer of hope. We have had some successes, such as one man who published a book of poetry. Some have gone to the university. We've helped former women prisoners, who may have been lured into something like trafficking drugs by their boyfriends, for example. Since it began we have touched, at least in a small way, 4000 to 5000 people.

In a country with 51% unemployment, however, it is not possible to make them fully productive citizens. But most are leading regular lives now. In our

courses there are also people from the slums and in the classroom you can not know who is the former prisoner and who is just a slum resident. This helps to reduce the stigma of having been in prison. I was also a member of another government commission that included lawyers in drafting policies for community service for petty offenders rather than sending them to prison. This commission also wants to sensitize the country to the issues of justice, punishment and what I suppose we can call restorative justice.

So, it just shows how in a small country you can become a member of important national initiatives.

As of mid-2010 Albertine was finishing his membership on these boards, due to increased work at the university. He finds university chaplaincy, at this particular university at this particular point in time, to be very rewarding.

I was in Venezuela for many years, then in Nigeria, and I have done formation work in several places plus the promotion work I did in the U.S. I would say that of all of these things I have done this has been the most important and satisfying work I have ever done.

National Catholic AIDS Action

Africa's population is expected to more than double by the year 2050, to well over two billion people, and probably to about two and a half to three billion. However, there are four countries in southern Africa that will lose population by the year 2050: Namibia by 12%, Botswana by 14%, Lesotho by 29%, and Swaziland by 34%. And a fifth country, the big one, South Africa, will grow only by 3% in the next forty years, from 47 million to about 48.4 million. The cause of this dramatic decline will be HIV/AIDS.

In theory, keeping population in check should help a country achieve its development goals, but in these countries population loss will take a sinister route. It is young adults and middle-aged adults, the most productive demographic in society, who will be routinely dying off. The social, psychological and economic consequences of this are difficult to imagine. These five countries, along with a sixth, Zimbabwe, have the highest rates of HIV/AIDS infection in the world, from over twenty percent to close to forty percent in Botswana and Swaziland (in 2005).

This report will focus only on Namibia and the work of Catholic AIDS Action, which has been directed by Maryknoll Father Rick Bauer since 2003, although a history of the response by the Catholic Church in all of these countries is another worthy project. In Namibia, already by the 1990s people had recognized that AIDS had reached a critical stage, with an infection rate in the 15-49-year age group of 22%, and it was feared that the epidemic was getting worse. In the year 2000 there were about 230,000 living with AIDS, which has dropped down to 180,000 to 200,000 in 2010, about 17% of the population, showing that great improvement has been accomplished. Of this number, 95,000 are women of child-bearing age and another 15,000 are children under the age of fifteen living with AIDS. AIDS is the leading cause of death in adults, accounting for

about half of all deaths of those aged 15 to 49. Despite the excellent work by the government and various organizations, such as Catholic AIDS Action, in the year 2005 only 17,000 were receiving antiretroviral treatments out of 33,000 who were in need. This has improved since then, but there are still thousands who are not receiving these life-saving medications. AIDS in Namibia has produced about 160,000 orphans and other vulnerable children.

The primary cause of infection is transmission by heterosexual sex, but there are many factors contributing to this. These include having multiple partners, transactional sex, child abuse, misconceptions in the general public about the risks of contracting HIV, low use of condoms, low rates of male circumcision, high rates of alcohol abuse, high rates of mobility and migration (i.e. rural to urban migration), and a decline in marital and cohabiting unions. Many of these factors are found in the other southern African countries, helping to explain the enormity of the pandemic in that area. One special area of concern is the mines, where traditionally the men live alone without their families. The Namibian government is now recommending that mines build accommodations for families, to eliminate one factor in HIV infection. The place in Namibia with the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection is the Caprivi Strip in northeastern Namibia, where there is a lot of truck transport with the neighboring countries of Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Truck drivers and commercial sex workers are the groups most vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS.

Namibia faces unique challenges in confronting the AIDS pandemic, such as its very rural population dispersed throughout a huge, sparsely populated territory, the lack of qualified medical, technical and managerial capacity in the rural areas, and the extremely high income disparity that means many families can not afford proper nutrition to say nothing of medical care.

The highest rate of HIV infection is among 30 to 34-year-olds, at 27%. However, the decrease from 22% to 17% between 2002 and 2010 and the fact that girls aged 15 to 19 have an infection rate of only 5.1% has encouraged the government to realize that comprehensive prevention strategies work. It recommends that prevention be intensified:

- HIV/AIDS components be mainstreamed into all development projects
- People be encouraged to use VCT (Voluntary Counseling and Testing) clinics
- Antiretroviral treatments be extended to all parts of the country, especially to rural areas.

Unless Namibia (and all the other southern African countries) can significantly reduce the extent of AIDS there will be not only severe social consequences but also damaging economic costs. The United Nations estimates that AIDS costs Namibia eight percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and twenty percent of government expenditure every year. It also estimates that between 2005 and 2009, a five year period, this plague cost Namibia six billion U.S. dollars, a staggering amount that a small, developing country can not afford.

In 1998 a remarkable Catholic nun, Sr./Dr. Raphaela Handler, along with Dr. Lucy Steinitz, started an organization, Catholic AIDS Action (CAA), under the auspices of the Namibian Catholic Bishops Conference to mobilize the Church's institutional competence and its extensive grassroots network to fight this disease. CAA has four principal focuses: home-based family care and counseling, youth education and

prevention, care and support to orphans and vulnerable children, and voluntary counseling and testing. In 2002 Dr. Handler and others on the board realized that they needed more resources and professional assistance and fortunately that was the very time when Fr. Rick Bauer was looking for a change of assignment.

Bauer was ordained in 1985 a diocesan priest, for the Archdiocese of Salt Lake City, Utah. However, he went to the seminary in Menlo Park, California, twenty or so miles south of San Francisco, from 1981 to 1985, when the AIDS epidemic first started surfacing in the United States. As he did not have any parish in California to be attached to, it was recommended that he do hospital ministry while in the seminary. Given San Francisco's large Gay community, he soon realized that much of his ministry in hospitals was to people with AIDS. Thus began what has been his life-long ministry, which as of 2011 has been for close to thirty years.

After ordination he went to Salt Lake City and joined Catholic Community Services, which provided support to the Youth AIDS Foundation. He comments:

People didn't know it, but Salt Lake City was one of the epicenters of AIDS treatment. It was the only quality medical care for southern Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah and western Colorado. Many of the people coming to Salt Lake City came for medical reasons.

He continued this work until 1996, obtaining his Masters Degree in Social Work during this time and also doing PhD studies in neuropsychology. At the same time he began nurturing an interest in international mission, in part because his mother had always had a copy of the Maryknoll Magazine on the coffee table at home, and in part because a good friend had joined the Maryknoll Sisters and was constantly inviting him to go to Africa. Bauer established a routine of each year going overseas for four weeks at a time, such as to the countries of Columbia, Brazil and Thailand, to the point that in 1994 his spiritual director began suggesting that he look into being an Associate Maryknoll priest.

What really changed it for me was the Vancouver International AIDS Conference in 1996, at which the triple drug cocktail to treat AIDS was announced. I looked at all the work that had been done in the U.S., and all the social services that exist, and compared that to the devastation in Africa and that I had seen in Bangkok. So, I made the decision to join Maryknoll. At that time I didn't know anything about Maryknoll regions, but given my desire to do AIDS ministry I went to Africa.

From 1997 to 2002 Bauer directed the Catholic AIDS program in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It had been set up by a Missionary of Africa priest, who immediately returned to France when Bauer arrived. The program needed funding, competent administration and a pastoral vision. Bauer says that he was greatly helped in these tasks by Sister Bridget Corrigan, a Medical Mission of Mary Sister who was also a Doctor. He immersed himself in contacting donors, writing up grant proposals (a laborious task), getting testing equipment, establishing a counseling protocol, and instilling the motto in everyone who worked or volunteered for the programs, that "no one dies alone." Prior to 2003 Tanzania

was not yet able to obtain the anti-retroviral therapies and thus everyone infected with HIV/AIDS ended up dying. He and Sr. Corrigan changed the Tanzania medical procedures, permitting nurses to administer oral morphine and other analgesics in home care settings so that people didn't die of excruciating pain. He also organized private workshops for priests and Bishops, to enable them to ask questions they might have been too embarrassed to ask in public and to emphasize the complementarity of Jesus' double ministry of mercy to the sick and prophetic call for social justice.

These workshops were also held in other African countries and one country Bauer went to in 2002 was Namibia. While there he met Sr./Dr. Handler, who was in charge of both Catholic Health Ministries and Catholic AIDS Action, more than she was able to do alone. She politely but earnestly requested Bauer: would he ever think of coming to Namibia?

By 2002 Dar es Salaam's AIDS program was very well organized and funded, and Bauer had already begun thinking of going elsewhere. He cited Maryknoll's maxim of staying only as long as you are wanted but not needed. He had renewed his contract as a Maryknoll Associate priest for another five years and had also taken in 2001 his first oath to become a full member of the Maryknoll Society (Bauer received much appreciated support from Bishop George Niederhauer of Salt Lake City, who said, "If this isn't from the Holy Spirit, you'll never make it; and if it is, I can't stop you.") and since the Maryknoll Africa Region was making Namibia one of its priorities, he made the decision in 2003 to transfer to Namibia. A year or two later he made his final oath to Maryknoll, while in Namibia. Bauer says that there were several things just beginning to happen in Namibia in 2003 that sealed his decision to go there.

It was only in 2003 that money for distributing antiretroviral therapies started to be disbursed in Africa, from the Global Fund (United Nations funding distributed through governments) and PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief, funded by the United States usually through faith-based organizations). U.S. Government funding has very strict rules and regulations, and no mistakes are allowed. Make a mistake and you will never see government funding again. Namibia was in urgent need of organizational capacity to administer these funds and the medications. Catholic AIDS Action in Namibia was also just opening the voluntary counseling and testing centers and wanted to know how to do that. They were also just beginning to boost up their prevention programs for youth.

Another important reason for going there was that HIV/AIDS was at 22% in Namibia whereas it had never got higher than 8 to 10% in Tanzania.

Bauer moved to Namibia in July of 2003, moving into the apartment that Fr. Dick Albertine had obtained close to the city center of Windhoek. Although Catholic AIDS Action had already begun some programs and had a staff throughout the country, he encountered several challenges.

When I arrived Catholic AIDS Action had a dozen offices in the country and thirty-seven staff people, more than I had in Dar es Salaam, and all three Bishops supported it in their dioceses. The challenge was that there was no

medical component: there were no doctors or nurses on the staff. Then in December, 2003, it was announced that Namibia would be a PEPFAR focus country. U.S. government officials visited us, saw how extensive our reach was, right down to village level, and said they were very willing to work with us.

Almost overnight it seemed we went from thirty-seven to 105 employees and from 1000 volunteers to 2700 volunteers. In prevention we went from a small program to the largest program in the country.

Another challenge was to get the Ministry of Health to acknowledge the importance of palliative care for those dying of AIDS. But with some other people I was able to get the oral morphine and analgesics for the people dying at the community level. We started the Namibia Palliative Care Task Force and now have a full-time person within the Ministry of Health.

The distances of this huge country also provide a challenge. The government does well in getting the medications all over, but people are supposed to come in every month to the clinic to be given the medications. That can be from 10 to 50 kilometers away, and it's easy for someone to miss an appointment. We now have eight nurses on our staff and they can go out with volunteers in our vehicles to the homes. We now (2010) have 8000 home care clients throughout the country.

One of the consequences of AIDS is the large number of orphans. Catholic AIDS Action's second largest program is supporting orphans, who numbered 17,000 in 2010. They live at home, usually with the extended family, remaining integral members of the local community. Bauer joked that he wants it written on his tombstone that "he never built an orphanage."

The point is that these children are in their community and their lives are disrupted as little as possible. We put a lot of emphasis on self-esteem building, processing through grief and loss, and education, that is that the child is in school.

Catholic AIDS Action does referrals for medical intervention for these children, provides the families with supplemental food, schedules after-school programs and special holiday camps, and engages in community advocacy on behalf of the orphans. With regard to education, CAA has a Saving Remnant Fund that educates about 300 in secondary school each year and about a dozen in either the University of Namibia or the Polytechnic, with the goal of assisting fifteen per year at the tertiary level.

Bauer tells of one phenomenal success story, a boy named Jason. He was very smart, finished high school with almost all As and managed to go to the University of Namibia. He wanted to be a doctor, so Bauer approached donors in the U.S. and obtained funding so Jason could complete pre-med in the university. Contacts in the U.S. were willing to help Jason go to medical school at Columbia University, but Bauer thought it more appropriate that he remain in Africa. Jason fortunately was accepted at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, the top medical school in all of Africa. He is expected to return to Namibia in 2011 to do his internship. Jason says that he wants "to work with people with AIDS."

He is just one of thousands in this country, kids who just need some support, an adult who cares for them, someone who insists that they study, and who helps them to deal with their loss.

When Bauer was working in the U.S. his ministry was directly with the people with AIDS. However, first in Tanzania and then in Namibia this changed. In Dar es Salaam he had a good staff and Bauer admitted that his Swahili never became sufficiently good. Thus, in both African countries his work became more in administration and especially in training. One group that he had to work with was the doctors, regarding the importance of relating personally with the patients. Doctors are trained in clinical care, but expect the social worker to deal with the patient in other matters.

My work is to be a trainer of trainers. The nurses' primary task is to train the volunteers, in provision of care, diagnosis, assessment, and in prevention work. They have to help the volunteers recognize what is or is not a side effect, and how to provide psychosocial support.

When I arrived the volunteers were receiving 80 hours of training, but now it is 120 hours. The initial period lasts about four months, with two weeks of training, then they go out with an experienced volunteer, then back for more training. The volunteers are organized into over 100 groups, with about five to fifteen people in each group.

In addition to the training, there is supervision, which is the real strength of our program. Each group is gathered for a day of supervision each month.

Supervision is about more than just social outreach and medical care. Bauer remembers the first years of AIDS in the U.S. and that many care-givers burned out after just a few years. Thus, he believes that there has to be a firm spiritual foundation to the work that the volunteers are doing, so they will be supported and remain committed into the future.

The first hour and a half of the day is spent with the word of God, i.e. the bible. Fewer than half our volunteers are Catholic but all are Christian and completely support what we are doing. I am a trained social worker and fully believe in the importance of social work. But we are a faith-based organization that provides social work. So, first we focus on the spirituality of health care.

Then we go to the heart, what's called critical incident stress debriefing. It's to prevent trauma in people. The volunteers are in the trenches with people who are very poor, who can't get medications, who can't get food, whose kids can't get school fees. Every house is a major, major trauma. We have to deal with the emotions of the volunteers. We go around in the circle asking each one to respond to what was the best part of the month, what was the worst part of the month. Did someone die? Did someone else unexpectedly become infected? And how are they responding emotionally?

Only then do we go to the third part, gathering statistics for the donors, etc. But I am very strict on this format: first the spirituality, second the emotions,

and third the administrative aspects. Our trainers are not allowed to deviate from this format. As a result we have had very low turnover.

So, a major part of my work is training the staff in how to do supervision. Another is if something new comes up in the field of AIDS. For instance, Namibia has the second highest rate of tuberculosis in the world, and it is linked to AIDS. I did massive training of our staff on how to recognize tuberculosis, make referrals, and help the volunteers protect themselves from being infected.

Although I am not in direct contact with the patients, I consider my work very pastoral. I am working constantly with 105 people and making the link between our faith and our ministry of mercy. I also do advocacy, which is also a pastoral service. For instance, I managed to get palliative care for the dying. The government ministry did not really want to spend money on those who are dying. Another issue that I advocated was to ensure that people have informed consent and that this be a part of government policies.

AIDS has afflicted all races and economic classes in Namibia, although Namibian Whites have an infection rate of only five to ten percent. Catholic AIDS Action is not treating any Whites or people from the upper-middle-class economic segment.

Our target is the poorest of the poor. Those with insurance can get the medications privately. It means that they have jobs and have transport. But this virus doesn't know any boundaries of race or class.

People are still dying, though, despite the anti-retroviral medicines. However, of our 8000 home-care clients 73% are taking the medications and are staying alive. This is a figure I would have considered laughably impossible when I arrived in 2003. So, the good news is that far fewer people are dying now. But the bad news is that those who are dying at home are getting far less attention than previously. This is part of our advocacy: that these people receive the palliative care that is necessary, so that they can die with dignity.

Directors of AIDS programs in Africa and others who are offering care, treatment and support to people with AIDS in many African countries are all currently expressing anxiety about continued international funding for their programs. Both the United States AID agency, which administers PEPFAR, and the UN's Global Fund are informing the programs in Africa, and all over the world, that funding is being reduced, even though over a million are newly infected with HIV every year.

I signed my PEPFAR budget for 2010 on October 1, 2009, and three weeks later they informed me that they were cutting it by fifteen percent. I complained but they said that I would have to live with it. Likewise, my Global Fund budget was cut ten percent. And they said that I should be prepared for cuts of twenty to fifty percent in future years.

At a meeting of Catholic AIDS Networks in Geneva in February, 2010, we discovered that this is true all over the world. Part of the problem is that AIDS fatigue is impacting the international donors. This disease has been around for thirty years and many of the donors had expected that we would have a vaccine

by now. But the only treatment available is these anti-retrovirals, which being generic drugs are relatively cheap but still unaffordable for people in poor countries. So, international donors are afraid they will have to fund the treatments indefinitely. There may also be a growing tendency to blame Africa for this problem, saying it's Africans' own fault because of their bad behavior.

So, my work is shifting to doing more advocacy. We have made incredible progress in Namibia. When I arrived the infection rate was twenty-two percent and now it is down to seventeen percent. We are going in the right direction, but it takes time and money to achieve this. If funding for these programs ends this will be a disaster.

In addition to PEPFAR and the Global Fund, CAA has twelve other international donors, many of them Catholic funding agencies in Germany but also including the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. However, these agencies can not possibly make up the deficit if the two big sources vastly reduce their funding. The CAA website lists ways that donors can contribute to it, in the United States via Maryknoll.

If in the 2010s people newly infected with AIDS are not going to be able to receive medications to keep them alive, because of affordability, this makes the matter of prevention all that more important. Catholic AIDS Action in Namibia has had success in this area, since the rate for young people has dropped from eleven percent to five percent. Bauer explains some of the things they have done to facilitate this.

We have concentrated on youth and young people, including those 17,000 orphans. We do not work with truck drivers or commercial sex workers or with gay men. With youth our main message is about healthy sexuality and that they are not ready, spiritually, emotionally or physically, to engage in sexual activity until after they are out of school. Unfortunately, in Namibia the average age for first intercourse is twelve years old. Our program is aimed to give kids skills to resist other people who try to pressure them into sexual activity. There is research that shows that if you talk to children and young people openly and honestly about human sexuality, rather than encourage sex, you actually delay sexual activity.

CAA has two prevention/education courses each year, Adventure Unlimited for the younger age group and Stepping Stones for the older youth and young adults. It has 450 trained, supervised volunteer peer educators, who reach ten thousand young people per year with these programs. The programs facilitate understanding of the following cofactors that provide motivation to change complex behavioral patterns and enhance positive community health: effective communication skills, gender issues, role of alcohol and AIDS, relationships and intimacy skills, and identifying cultural norms and practices.

Another group that has received focused attention is the men of Namibia, as Bauer explains:

At an international conference in Bangkok a group of us brainstormed about the failure of prevention programs around the world. This was true whether the program emphasized abstinence, faithfulness or condoms. One of the things

we realized was that most of the clients are women. At voluntary counseling and testing centers in Africa seventy percent of clients are women and only thirty percent are men. Much of the testing is done at pre-natal clinics so that if an expectant mother is found to be HIV positive the clinic can begin treating her with nevirapine. But a man who wished to be tested would find himself sitting there with forty women. So, we set ourselves a task of finding out how to get men more involved.

On my return to Windhoek I wrote a grant proposal for a project that I called 'Men's Empowerment,' which some people thought was a joke. But a group of us developed a series of workshops for men at the village level on gender stereotypes, asking questions on what it means to be a man, and on behaviors expected of "real men," such as many sexual partners, drinking, taking risks, and so on. Then we ask them which of these behaviors affect their health. These workshops give them the chance to look at masculinity from spiritual and psychosocial perspectives and define what it means to be a man. This was a curriculum developed by Engender Health, for which we added a section on men in the bible.

We have been doing this since 2008 and have achieved some successes. We were the first in the African continent to have men's-only health care groups. Of our volunteers we have gone from only one percent who are men to twelve percent. We got many to deeply reflect on how "real" men treat women, care for their children, and interrelate both with women and with other men. We scheduled a men-only testing day at which 15,000 men showed up.

We are also scheduling some workshops for male clergy by themselves, of various denominations. At one workshop, at which most of the men were well educated and holding good jobs, I discovered that some basic health information was unknown. I mentioned prostate cancer and many in the room did not know what the prostate was. We also discovered that if you ask a group of women how many have seen a doctor in the past year virtually 100 percent will respond in the affirmative, whereas fewer than thirty percent of men will respond the same way.

So, we are now revamping the health services in Namibia, both in prevention and in treatment, to make them more friendly to men.

There has been a complete change from thirty years ago, when I was working in San Francisco with Gay men, many of whom admitted to having 300 or so sexual partners, to now when in California they are insisting on their right to monogamous marriage. In Namibia we are holding workshops for men at which we are emphasizing the role of intimacy and relationships, and asking them what they want from life. We have space for 25 but 300 show up. So, change can take place. There is a hunger for this.

Bauer is more than willing to talk about the spiritual foundations for his own personal spirituality and for the work he is doing.

From my earliest days I have always loved Luke. Luke was a physician and his writings, the Gospel and Acts, are filled with the theme of healing. I do mini-retreats for health care workers and volunteers and we go through the Gospel

of Luke. We read how Jesus was constantly with the sick and that he had no toleration for any discrimination against any form of sickness. In those days people with leprosy or women with hemorrhages were excluded from the community, but Jesus touched them and healed them.

A group of us who meet at Geneva every year are also developing a curriculum for workshops for Bishops, who I believe are not well-informed about AIDS and HIV. A major part of this will be on the bible. Another important part of this curriculum will be on the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Reconciliation. For example, if one member of the community has HIV how does that affect our understanding of Eucharist? We have had successful workshops with clergy so now we have to do it with Bishops.

Bauer is pleased with his life and work in Namibia and like the other two Maryknollers in Windhoek, Dick Albertine and Ed Shellito, hopes to stay for several more years. At the same time, all three have said that they are uncertain for how long they will agree to stay or be allowed to stay. For the time being, though, Maryknoll is making a solid contribution to Namibia, despite the small numbers of personnel.

Counseling and Treatment of Substance Abuse

Fr. Ed Shellito went to the Philippines for the first time in 1977 as an OTP (Overseas Training Program) seminarian, returned to the U.S. and was ordained in 1980, and then went back to the Philippines. For a number of years he did parish work in southern Philippines and also served in the U.S. in Maryknoll's Promotion Department for three years. After his return to parish work in the Philippines he overworked and needed to take a renewal program in the U.S. Again on return to the Philippines he went to Manila instead, becoming a hospital chaplain at a city hospital. This led to his becoming director of two drug rehabilitation centers, which he structured for males only. As a result, some priests also came to be rehabilitated – and Shellito learned that part of his ministry would be to priests with difficulties.

In 1997 Shellito started, with support from the Archdiocese of Manila and the Maryknoll Region, a live-in center for clergy that would treat behavioral problems such as sexual problems, addictions, authority problems, financial misappropriations, manipulative behavior, and other behavioral issues. This was modeled after St. Luke's Institute in Washington, DC, although smaller in size, and some clergy started coming from other countries in Asia. At that time the Philippines Bishops Conference decided to have two representatives from every diocese and from every religious congregation trained in the pastoral and psychological accompaniment of fellow priests. Shellito became part of the staff teaching this program at the Jesuit University in Manila. Finally, in 2004 the Maryknoll Region concluded that he should get a degree in pastoral counseling. He went to Loyola College of Baltimore for three years and obtained a Masters Degree in Pastoral Counseling. Because of his long experience and extensive reading in these subjects he did very well at Loyola, and he also felt very affirmed by the university professors.

On completion of his course in 2007 it was presumed that Shellito would return to the Philippines, but he felt that the Philippines Church had by then reached an advanced stage of development and had its own local personnel who could direct the counseling and treatment programs there. He looked at other places, such as Hong Kong, Mombasa in Kenya, and Namibia. The Archbishops of both Mombasa and Windhoek issued him warm invitations and he visited both places in October, 2007, but in the end Shellito chose Namibia. "It was a young church and that thrilled me. I thought that Maryknoll might still have something that we could offer in that context."

Due to delays getting a work permit for Namibia and the postponement of the Africa Regional Assembly, held in Nairobi, Kenya, to April, 2008, because of the post-election violence in Kenya, Shellito went first to Capetown, South Africa, to study the Afrikaans language for three months. After the Regional Assembly he stayed in Nairobi for several months, finally going to Namibia in June, 2008, on a tourist visa. He then obtained a work permit under the Archbishop's sponsorship. (The work permit visa for expatriate priests in Namibia is for two years only, with visa renewal permission presumed, at least for now.)

Archbishop Nashenda had already been informed of Shellito's background in counseling and addictions treatment and did not offer any pastoral assignment to him. Instead he suggested twelve different possibilities, some of which Shellito thought he had insufficient cultural knowledge to undertake and others which seemed not really feasible. He finally accepted to establish a base at the Catholic Hospital, about a quarter mile from the Catholic Cathedral, at which he would be known as counselor to the staff. The hospital is run by Benedictine Sisters, originally from Germany.

I began doing counseling for some of the workers at the hospital. The administration sent me a number of lower echelon workers who had developed drinking problems or gambling problems. Amazingly they were able to turn around in a matter of weeks, whereas I am used to seeing recovery take years. This enlightened me on the ideology of some of the problems here. I also made myself available to the nursing staff, who made use of my help, including with their studies.

Eventually, I was able to open a counseling and spiritual direction office behind the Cathedral, where I am now situated. The Archbishop was very excited about this office, since it seems to be a necessary requirement for a diocese.

Shellito's work in counseling also led to his being asked to teach pastoral counseling at the major seminary and to help form a program in on-going education for the Namibian diocesan priests, both of which have been written about above.

The group with which he has been doing the most one-on-one counseling is religious Sisters.

I am encountering very deep problems, mainly with relationships with their superiors. This stems from their childhood and upbringing. A number come from families that would not be considered stable in the United States. Some have also experienced rape and sexual abuse, in part due to the war before

Independence. Unfortunately, this is not talked about among the Sisters themselves.

I have also discovered a general lack of knowledge about hygiene, the functioning of bodily systems, and the need to monitor one's own personal health, such as checking for breast cancer. Here, once breast cancer is discovered it is often too late to cure. Even their educational level does not seem to be high, at best secondary school, at schools that were not the best.

In 2009 a Sister from South Africa began here in Namibia a series of seminars in spiritual direction for about fourteen or sixteen superiors of various congregations and those doing formation work. I have been a guest lecturer at these seminars. This has also helped the superiors know that I will continue to be available for them.

I have also been trying to develop a workshop for Sisters on feminine hygiene, although it would not be good for me – a male – to give it. But I have not been able to find a female doctor – a gynecologist – to conduct the workshop for a minimum fee. So, this is a plan for the future.

When there is a change of leadership of these congregations, as indigenous Namibians start assuming leadership of the congregations, I think the Sisters will be able to better address these issues.

In addition to his counseling work and part-time teaching in the seminary, Shellito has also been asked by the Archbishop to be chaplain to the Catholic Charismatic Community. None of the clergy in Windhoek were interested in this, but Shellito did have some good experiences with charismatic groups in the Philippines, even if he did not consider himself charismatic.

I am able to give Life in the Spirit seminars. The Charismatic movement in Windhoek is fully approved of by the Archbishop, but just needed good leadership and direction. A priest who previously worked with them went a little wild, which made the Archbishop wary. The current leadership keeps the Archbishop informed and involved in what they are doing.

Shellito is also learning about the African beliefs regarding the problem of evil and the role of diviners in discerning the activity of the spirit world. He had never worked before in Africa and had been in Namibia only two years when he was interviewed for this history, so he was still in the process of learning. He has discovered, though, that there are very few Catholics in Namibia who do not believe in evil spirits and in humans who can cause evil, which is what is meant by witchcraft. Trying to assimilate these beliefs into his counseling work is a prime reason why he is trying to go slow in all he does.

The legacy of apartheid also seems to weigh heavily on Namibia and not merely in terms of economic and social disparities. According to Shellito it is a dark shadow that is not being adequately excised from the psyches, memories and dreams of Black Namibians.

They have been told for so long that they are second or third class citizens and of no good that they have come to believe that in many ways and act it out. So, they believe it is not good to have goals and not good to have dreams. It is difficult for me to do theology and spirituality without an idea of a future and of a better tomorrow.

Compounding what happened in the past, their culture is being systematically eroded, by migration, economics and of course the introduction of western culture.

The native healer could actually assist in trying to integrate the past and the present. We need to rid the idea of the witch doctor from its negative sense.

I think it would help if we could develop the whole idea of creation theology and creation spirituality. It would help them get back to their African roots and show them that the Catholic faith can be transforming and help them move into the future.

Shellito also wonders at times if Maryknoll would better serve the local Church by taking a parish and practicing a new model of church, one that would be better acculturated, include the laity in all facets of parish structures, and listen to the desires of the local people. In his estimation, Namibians are not presently articulating their concerns and wishes in an effective manner. If a group of Maryknollers did take a parish it would have to be in one tribal area and they would have to learn the local language. Shellito remembers the vibrant, active parishes they had in the Philippines, with much involvement of the laity and great community interaction, and would like to see such a model of parish in Namibia. However, he admits that because of lack of personnel Maryknoll is probably not able to do this.

When he was interviewed for this history Shellito had been in Namibia only two years and was still easing himself into both Namibian society and the church in this country. He believes that it is necessary for him to move slowly in deciding on any specific apostolates, through communicating with and listening to the local church and the Archbishop. He hopes to remain in Namibia for a good number of years and to do what will help this church to continue growing in faith.

Rundu Vicariate

Rundu is a small city on the banks of the Kavango River about 420 miles north of Windhoek. At an altitude of 3,600 feet it has a warm to sometimes hot climate, but with pleasant evenings and sufficient rainfall to support rain-fed agriculture. Because it is the only large town for hundreds of miles in any direction Rundu has become a major transit junction between the Caprivi Strip, Windhoek and Walvis Bay. Zambia and Zimbabwe, both land-locked countries, use the highway through Rundu both for exports to and imports from the port at Walvis Bay. As a result, Rundu's population has grown rapidly to 76,000 (2009), making it the second largest city in Namibia. It is also the central city for the Kavango ethnic group, Namibia's second largest, who engage primarily in subsistence farming, fishing and livestock raising (cattle and goats) in the riverine area stretching out ten or so miles south of the river. The Kavango are also noted for

fashioning highly-skilled craft items made of wood, which can be bought in crafts stores in Rundu and Windhoek. The government plans to complement this skill with organized forestry projects that together will create improved income possibilities, in the production not only of crafts but also furniture. Rundu has a small airport and has become a connecting point for tourists traveling to the game parks of northern Namibia or for fishing expeditions on the river. Rundu has about a half dozen mid-priced but well-maintained hotels, located along the banks of the river, and there are numerous lodges and camps in the rural parts of Kavango Region.

There are five secondary schools in Rundu plus some colleges and other tertiary level educational institutions. The University of Namibia and the Polytechnic have centers in Rundu, enabling some to do their learning from a distance. The city also has a large regional hospital. In recent years the city government in collaboration with the national government has installed piped water to all the formal estates of the city. New housing developments are constantly being added to the city, although there are several informal settlements ringing the city.

The Kavango River is the fourth largest river in southern Africa at 1000 miles long, originating in the central Angolan highlands that are around 6000 feet in altitude and then flowing southward for several hundred miles to where it forms the border between Angola and Namibia for about 300 miles. After being joined by the Cuito River that also comes out of Angola it finally flows south for one hundred miles, ending up in the Okavango Swamp (or Delta) in northern Botswana. The rains come to central Angola in January and February, averaging over fifty inches a year, but the flooded river takes four months, till June, to flow to the Swamp. At that time it creates a hundred mile wide lake that attracts thousands of animals and birds, including many flamingos, making it one of the most spectacular wildlife reserves in the world. Namibia is planning to construct a hydroelectric dam on the river at the Caprivi Strip, which is strongly objected to by the government of Botswana and by environmentalists, although Namibia claims that the dam would divert relatively little water.

It is only in northern Namibia that one encounters people living in connected small farms, similar to other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and in contrast to the rest of Namibia in which one sees only endless miles of bush, semi-desert or grasslands. Even though the two northern ethnic groups, Ovambo and Kavango, comprise sixty percent of Namibia's population, it is still not a densely populated area. Eighty percent of the Kavango live in the relatively small riverine area, although the remainder eke out a living in the interior, primarily through livestock raising.

The contrast between northern Namibia and the rest of the country was described by Brother Mark Gruenke, one of three Maryknollers who have been working in the Vicariate of Rundu.

Once we cross the Mururani Gate, the old apartheid gate when South Africa was in control, about eighty miles before Rundu, all of a sudden we leave the vast wilderness of big ranches where you don't see anyone and immediately start seeing African villages, cattle, grass huts, and people walking along the road. For those of us who worked in eastern Africa we feel that we are back in Africa again.

Northern Namibia is hot and relatively dry, although not near as arid as the rest of the country. Rainfall is sufficient for subsistence farmers to get annual harvests through dependence on rain-fed agriculture and drought resistant crops, such as pearl millet, the primary staple crop, but also sorghum, cassava and some maize. Given its fertile soil and flat terrain, much of the area near the river is suitable for irrigation, and some irrigation schemes have been started, growing corn and green vegetables. The government has a few small irrigation projects but so far the chief beneficiaries of the irrigation potential have been those with access to large amounts of capital, such as White farmers from South Africa. Additionally, lack of managerial capacity has impeded local African peoples from starting and running large irrigation schemes.

Most of the subsistence farmers in northern Namibia are very poor. Kavango Region, one of thirteen regions in Namibia, is officially classified as the poorest in the country, with a very low Human Development index rating. It was known in the past as a place to collect young Africans from rural areas who wished to migrate to the mines or the towns to the south. Although most of the people in the region are of the Kavango ethnic group, there are a number of Angolans who migrated in during the Angolan civil war, and many San people have also migrated to the region, primarily to Rundu.

The Kavango themselves are a Bantu group that migrated to Namibia from the Great Lakes area of East and Central Africa around 1750 to 1800. They are one of the few African tribes that is matrilineal, i.e. which traces lineage down through the mother or wife. Traditionally they were divided into five kingdoms or sub-tribes, each with a slightly different variation on the language, and each of which was led by a chief or king (called *hompá* or *fumu*). The extended family system (called *ekoro*) is extremely important, organized around the clan. Clans are ranked in importance and the most senior clan demands a high level of respect.

The Vicariate of Rundu comprises the Regions of Kavango and Caprivi in the northeastern corner of Namibia, plus parts of two neighboring Regions to the west and southwest. For reasons unknown, the Regions populated by the Ovambo people in the northwest of the country are within the Archdiocese of Windhoek, despite the enormous distance to Windhoek. The Rundu Vicariate has been led since 1994 by Bishop Joseph S. Shikongo, a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), who were the first group of missionaries in northern Namibia. The Vicariate is well evangelized: of a total population of close to 300,000 over one-third, about 108,000, are Catholic. There are ten parishes in the Vicariate, each with innumerable outstations, some of which are large centers. There are only seventeen priests in the Vicariate, of which only four are diocesan priests. In addition to Oblates, there are also Salesians and Capuchins working in the diocese. Augmenting the sacramental services of the priests are over ten deacons in the diocese, who lead Sunday Eucharistic services without a priest, preach, conduct marriages, baptize, lead funeral services and instruct the catechumenate. There are several Religious Brothers in the Vicariate and close to forty Sisters, of various Religious Orders. An indigenous group of Benedictine Sisters, called the Oshikuku Sisters, have their main convent at Grootfontein, 150 miles southwest of Rundu, but within the Vicariate.

Beginning in 2005 three Maryknollers, one priest and two Brothers, opted to accept the warm invitation of Bishop Shikongo to join the Vicariate of Rundu. A primary

factor in this was the sense of truly being in sub-Saharan Africa as compared to the rest of Namibia, but other factors were its pleasant climate and ready access to food and water. The stark poverty, immediately obvious to any visitor, and the myriad social needs of the local people were also major factors.

The first to arrive was Fr. Wayne Weinlader, in 2005. He was ordained a diocesan priest in 1968 in Illinois and then joined Maryknoll in 1972. He worked in Asia for some years and afterwards was a chaplain in the U.S. military for many years. After finishing his final tour of duty in the military chaplain corps he decided to go back overseas in mission, even though he was approaching his seventieth birthday, and chose Namibia. He unfortunately was not interviewed for this history and so there is little that can be said about his work. He engaged in social services and social outreach in the city of Rundu, including running a large soup kitchen. This was under the auspices of the Vicariate and was not directly connected to the town parish, which is staffed by Salesian Fathers. He worked in Rundu for over four years, until in early 2010 he developed health problems. Given his age, he made the decision to return to the U.S. for medical care and also to join the retirement community. He is now living in Yuma, Arizona.

SACRED HEART PARISH, NYANGANA: Computer/secretarial school and youth work

Nyangana Parish, as was noted above, is the oldest parish in northern Namibia, founded on May 21, 1910. On Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2010, it celebrated its 100th anniversary, a very festive occasion attended by two Maryknoll Brothers, Mark Gruenke and Loren Beaudry, and a Maryknoll Affiliate, Mrs. Ginger Yorio from New York City. According to Gruenke, it may also be the largest parish in the whole country in terms of numbers of Catholics. He estimates that fifty percent of the total population of 40,000 are Catholic, about 20,000. If this figure is correct, then Nyangana has close to one-fifth of the Catholics in the Vicariate and one of every twelve Catholics in the country. The parish has about fifty outstations, or communities as they are called, of which six are large Mass centers. In 2010 they were served by only one priest, Fr. Charles Mikaya, a diocesan priest originally from Malawi, although a second diocesan priest had been in the parish briefly. Mikaya is assisted by four permanent, married deacons, who do all the sacramental and catechetical services as enumerated above. In addition to the deacons, other church leaders in the communities lead Sunday services without a priest, at which they preach and distribute communion. Income in the parish is extremely low; the parish website states that the weekly collection is only about eight or nine U.S. dollars and there is no church tax. The parish is very dependent on benefactors from elsewhere, especially from Germany. (A comment on this will be made below.)

The parish is located on the banks of the Kavango River, which in recent years has flooded right up to the edge of the property, only 200 yards from the church. The local people are called the Gciriku, a sub-tribe or kingdom of the Kavango, who speak a dialect which has several clicking sounds. In 1910 their Chief granted a huge plot (perhaps fifty acres, maybe more) to the Catholic Church, the reason for it being the first parish. The OMI Oblates from Germany staffed this parish for over ninety years, finally

handing it over to the Vicariate in 2005, just shortly before the Maryknoll Brothers arrived there. On the plot today is a large Catholic Hospital, a hostel for schoolgirls in the sixth to tenth grades in neighboring schools, a youth center, a pastoral center with accommodations for several dozen parishioners attending weekend courses, a convent for the Sacred Heart Sisters from Kerala, India, who staff the hospital and oversee the girls' hostel, a computer/secretarial school managed by Gruenke, two buildings with apartments for volunteers, several farming and livestock projects, and of course the church – a new church which not long ago replaced the decades-old church.

Gruenke was the first of the two Maryknollers to begin living in Nyangana, in July, 2006. He was originally a Christian Brother, stationed in Minnesota, but then joined Maryknoll as an Associate Brother from 1983 to 1988, working in Brazil. After a year back in Minneapolis, he then joined Maryknoll permanently and returned to Brazil, serving there from 1990 to 1997. After four years doing Maryknoll Vocation work in Houston he returned to mission work overseas. He chose the mission in Metangula, Mozambique, that had been staffed by Maryknoll since 1997. Other Maryknoll Brothers either were or had been stationed there and Gruenke had skills that complemented the needs of that undeveloped area in post-war, northern Mozambique. He had another crucial advantage for working in Mozambique: he was fluent in Portuguese after his many years in Brazil. In 2005 the other Maryknollers had finished up their assignments in Metangula and a recently ordained diocesan priest, originally from Burundi, who had been a deacon in Metangula Parish and who had been sponsored as a seminarian by Fr. Ken Thesing, was assigned to be the pastor of the parish. There had been hope that priests from the South Korean Missionary Society would help in Metangula Parish, but they went to a different part of Mozambique. Rather than remain as the only Maryknoller in Mozambique, Gruenke decided to look for an assignment elsewhere in Africa, preferably in East Africa.

The Region informed him that there were three priorities, Mombasa in Kenya, Mwanza in Tanzania, and Namibia. Gruenke began touring all these places and had a good experience in Mombasa where there were two other Maryknoll Brothers at that time, and an even better experience in Mwanza, where he spent six months helping to set up the computers at Nyegezi Seminary and also learning Swahili. He found the people in Tanzania very friendly and felt that Maryknoll had a good community in Mwanza. Namibia was not one of his preferred options, but he went there anywhere to see what it was like. He relates what happened:

Windhoek is a very nice city, a small, modern city. But I didn't come to Africa to work in a city like Windhoek. For a retired person this would be a good place. There is good ministry going on there, but it just didn't appeal to me.

Wayne Weindler was already stationed in Rundu and he invited me to visit there with him. The first thing that happened was when we crossed the Mururani Gate and I felt that I was back in Africa again. We stayed at Rundu for several days and I visited the Salesians who were running the parish in the city. Since Loren Beaudry had already committed to joining me wherever I went, I was looking for something either permanent in Rundu or temporary, for only one year until Loren came. But even though the parish was understaffed and it had a youth center, the priests in Rundu did not seem interested in our being staffed there.

Weinlader then said that there was one other place, Nyangana, sixty miles east of Rundu, adjacent to the Caprivi Highway, which is an excellent road. At Nyangana Fr. Charles gave me a great welcome and asked me what I had been doing in Mozambique. When I said communications work and computer teaching, he said that was exactly what was needed in Nyangana. A computer training course had been started for girls by Peace Corps Volunteers, who had completed their tour, and Fr. Charles had obtained several computers. He needed someone to run the course.

As we were leaving Nyangana Weinlader asked me what I thought of Charles and the parish. I said that I would certainly enjoy living with Charles and working there. Wayne stopped the car, ran right in to tell Charles this, and then we came to an agreement. We then went back to Rundu and cleared it with the Bishop. Actually, getting someone for Nyangana was a priority for the Bishop, so he was very happy.

I have been very happy since coming here to Nyangana and the main reason I came was I saw I could have a good community life with Fr. Charles. His personality, his manner of working and the style in which he relates to people were all attractive. Some say you should choose the particular ministry, but I think it is more important to choose the people you can live with. There is good ministry anywhere, but I want to be on a team that I can work with and enjoy life.

Unfortunately, it took six to eight months, from late 2005 to mid-2006, for Gruenke to get a work visa for Namibia. It was during this time that he stayed in Mwanza, volunteering to set up the computer systems at the seminary. He arrived in Nyangana in July, 2006, and Beaudry came only a month or so later.

Brother Loren Beaudry had worked in Kenya from the time he began his Overseas Training Program (OTP) in 1985 to 2003, with the exception of two years in the U.S. to gain his Bachelors Degree in Pastoral Ministry at Empire State College in New York. He did youth ministry in parishes in the Archdioceses of Nairobi and Mombasa from 1986 to 1993 and then from 1995 to 2003 he was director of the Grandsons of Abraham home and program for street boys in Mombasa. After doing Vocations ministry for Maryknoll in the U.S., based in Chicago, for three years, in 2006 he decided to return to mission in Africa. He had been communicating with Gruenke since 2005, saying he would like to join him in Namibia. Working in a rural area of Africa appealed to him, as most of the time he had been stationed in urban areas. Finally, in August, 2006, he went to Namibia and Nyangana, and unlike Gruenke he received his work permit almost immediately. The original plan was that they would stay in a place for one year only before making a permanent commitment to a place, but they both liked Nyangana so much that they informed the Bishop that they would stay there indefinitely.

When Beaudry arrived in Windhoek the two of them purchased a four-wheel drive station wagon that had a grill on the front. That grill saved the vehicle, as Beaudry explains:

On our first drive from Windhoek to Rundu with that vehicle, a long, full-day trip through bright sun and never-ending grasslands, we were in a very rural area and driving at a good rate of speed – although not as fast as the typical driver

in Namibia – when suddenly a kudu, a large antelope, ran onto the road in front of us, jumped, and on its way down it kicked the front of our vehicle. But the grill saved the vehicle and we had no damage to the vehicle itself. I don't know what happened to the kudu. We learned a lesson then about having to be constantly aware when driving along the highways in Namibia. In addition to the kudus there are also many wart hogs along the side of the roads.

On arrival back in Nyangana both set themselves into the respective apostolates that took them to the parish – setting up a computer course/secretarial school and engaging in youth ministry.

A Peace Corps worker named Natalie Poole, from Arizona, had started a computer course for the girls who lived at the hostel, who were in grades six to ten. However, the Sisters in charge of the hostel did not view this as a true subject matter and expected the girls to do housework at the hostel, so this class never did well. Gruenke also feels that since it was free it was not truly valued, so he changed it to a course for young men and women from the area who had finished the tenth grade, since knowledge of English was necessary. He was given use of a building, which was fixed up as a computer lab, and obtained some donations to help start the course. He used course material from Tanzania, which he improved for the situation in Nyangana. After a short time, the girls said that they needed more than just computer knowledge. “They said they need office skills, because of course they all wanted to get employment in offices somewhere.” But since he had no secretarial skills, Gruenke had to look elsewhere.

I received a phone call from Maretta McKenna, who was the coordinator of Maryknoll's short-term volunteer program asking if I could use someone with business and office skills. This was Ginger Yorio from New York, who had worked for General Electric and had been in charge of an office. She came for three months in 2007 and taught four girls in office and business skills as a practice run. She came again in 2009 for five months and taught six girls that time. She also put together materials to make a course in office skills.

In 2010 we had others come, David and Paula Schaffner, a married couple from California, who were here for three months. Paula is a teacher, an expert in teaching English as a second language, and she taught the business skills course. She also put the whole course on disc, so it's now an organized, professional course. Now (April, 2010) Ginger has come back again for her third time and will be here for up to five months.

These volunteers, who are all Maryknoll Affiliates in the U.S., have made a great contribution to the course and are well liked. At the end of this year (2010) another couple will be coming here from Oregon, the wife to teach in the business course and the husband to do some painting and maybe teach judo to older youth – both boys and girls.

The computer course teaches the students, who are primarily young mothers, Windows XP, Microsoft Word, Excel, and internet skills. In the business course they learn receptionist skills, how to receive phone calls, office protocol, filing skills, how to

handle petty cash, taking care of checking accounts, and banking and business English. Fluency in business English is an absolute requirement for getting a job in Namibia. The students are able to learn and practice English on a Rosetta Stone course provided by Ginger Yorio. They must do 120 hours of work on this course in order to gain their Office Skills Certificate from the computer/business school, which is called Sacred Heart Computer Center. In addition to these course requirements, they are also taught job search techniques, which give them an advantage in seeking employment in the Nyangana/Rundu area.

Gruenke explains that the program has three facets:

The first level is just the basic instruction, teaching local young women computer and office skills, which hopefully will enable them to gain employment. The second level is looking for a few service-minded students who are also able to learn quickly and who can then be sent on for further training and come back to be assistants here. The final level is to organize a steady stream of volunteers, primarily through Maryknoll's Affiliate program, to come here for some months – both to contribute here by utilizing the skills they've gained either teaching or working in the business arena and to proffer them an opportunity to gain an understanding about mission and the reality of rural Africa.

As the year 2011 began, the computer center had become so well established that they had no problem filling the twelve places available. The center is restricted by space and the number of computers available, and can not expand beyond twelve students. The great advantage of having so few students is the teachers can provide individual attention. As good as the course is it was not able to attract a full number of students in the beginning years, in part because it charges fees (nominal fees; it is heavily subsidized by Gruenke, the volunteers, Maryknoll and other donors). After many of the students started finding jobs – and all the 2010 graduates were able to find some kind of work – the course is now not only full, but Gruenke exuberantly exclaimed, “We now have a waiting list.”

In the years 2006 and 2007, when the course was just being started, Gruenke and Yorio used various means to advertise the course, such as announcements on the local language radio station, distribution of brochures about the course, and visiting of large farms, lodges and organizations, from which they hoped some young women might come or be sent for the course. Word-of-mouth, which is called locally the “African telegraph,” has been the biggest asset in attracting students.

Right from the beginning Gruenke also realized that he had to find a few of the students who would be the qualified local ingredient in the operations of the course, if for instance he went on vacation or for Maryknoll matters, or during the in-between times when American volunteers would be absent. A local man, Ndembere Celestinus, worked with Gruenke in constructing the physical building for the center and setting it up and was then sent to Windhoek to learn computer repair, paid for by Gruenke. Celestinus now works in Rundu but is available to help in Nyangana. Gruenke explains that Celestinus has to work in a town in order to earn an income.

He tried to work here in Nyangana, but no one wanted to pay him for repairing their computers. He is related to them all, in some way, and so they all fell back on the traditional form of exchange, kinship reciprocity, rather than the modern form of monetary exchange. Of course, in most cases the ones who have computers are teachers in schools that have been given computers for free or other people who have been given free computers. So, maybe they all expect free repair service. In our course the teachers are related to the students, but we pay them.

In addition to Celestinus, two local women have also been hired: Maria Nyangana, who teaches in the Business Skills course; and Benitha Matumbo, who has studied computer for three years and obtained what is called an International Drivers License of Computing, a professional qualification developed by Microsoft, which is recognized internationally. In effect, Benitha is actually qualified to teach computer studies anywhere in the world. Gruenke states that the teaching aspect of the course is well set up at present.

It was always my goal to have this level of professionalism from the local community, to have local people who are certified. Although they are receiving salaries, they are doing this out of a sense of service. And they are all expert. I can be gone for a month or two and everything runs perfectly. Problems never arise; they come on time every day; they are there to help the students. I am very proud of this.

The third facet of Gruenke's program has also gone well, obtaining short-term volunteers with the right qualifications and enabling them to live in Nyangana, a remote place lacking in amenities, for three to five months every year. He talked about this at some length.

Anybody with an education background or who has worked in an office can come here and teach this course. It is not difficult for them to come short-term as volunteers, since they don't need work visas. In fact, they actually pay their own money to stay here.

This is a natural place to bring in volunteers, since the living situation here is very good. We have two apartments, which have been rehabilitated nicely and well furnished. They can eat all their meals here in the rectory with us, or eat some or all of their meals in their apartments, whatever they prefer.

So far they have all been Maryknoll Affiliates and so are members of networks back in the U.S. Ginger is a member of the Manhattan Subway group and has formed connections with many people. She does fund-raising for us and raises from \$3,000 to even \$10,000 a year. The Affiliates from California and Oregon are likewise spreading the word about us.

The Schaffners have gone even one step further than this. In March, 2011, they hosted Fr. Charles Mikaya, our pastor, in California, taking him to the Religious Education Conference that is held in Anaheim every year. He experienced a lot during this trip. While he was in the U.S. he was also hosted by other volunteers who had been in Nyangana over the past few years.

Gruenke believes that spirituality is an essential component for a missionary or volunteer living in a distant, trans-cultural context, such as exists in Nyangana. He not only attends daily Mass, when Mass is held at the church in Nyangana (on many of the weekdays Fr. Charles says Mass in the other centers or small communities), but also recites morning prayers and the breviary in the evening each day, with whoever else wishes to join him. In general the volunteers come every evening for the breviary, also joined by Beaudry and Fr. Charles when they are there. Neither of the two Maryknoll Brothers nor any of the volunteers has learned the local language, except for greetings, essential phrases and a few vocabulary words, so opportunities for social interaction with the local people are limited.

While Gruenke was establishing the computer/business skills course, Brother Loren Beaudry immersed himself into working with the youth. When he arrived one of the first things he helped organize was the annual Youth Conference, which is also the biggest youth event during the year. Youth came in from forty-two outstations for sports, a general get-together, and talks on various topics. Three months later a regional rally was held, at which youth came from several parishes for sports and talks. This gave the local Nyangana youth an opportunity to interact with the wider community. Both of these events are annual events.

Beaudry discovered in the first year one enduring challenge in working with both youth and adults in Nyangana, their unwillingness, or inability, to pay for anything. The parish has a pastoral center, with accommodations for overnight, at which Fr. Charles charges five Namibian dollars a day (about seventy U.S. cents). The local people complain about the price and often refuse to pay. Beaudry elaborated further on problems they have faced with money.

The following year the youth said they would go somewhere else for the Youth Conference, but they discovered that a boarding school charges forty Namibia dollars a day (over five U.S. dollars). They cut the price in half, but the youth still had to pay sixty Namibian dollars for three days. I paid two-thirds of this, though. This meant that they still had to pay twenty Namibian dollars each.

Since this is less than three U.S. dollars, it seems like very little to us. But we have to remember that the daily wage in Nyangana is only forty Namibian dollars a day.

The youth who come to the annual Conference are aged 13 to 24 and they like the conference a lot. We are now planning this year's conference, but we will again run into the problem of payment.

Fr. Charles has the same problem with parishioners who are expected to come in to the pastoral center for workshops and seminars. They expect the parish to supply all the food and pay for everything. Many refuse to come if they have to pay.

It is the same at the Youth Center that we built. We want to charge an annual membership fee, a very small amount that would pay towards the cost of electricity, but the youth refuse to pay. I organized a pool tournament and charged one Namibian dollar (about fourteen U.S. cents) and only three showed up.

The unemployment rate in the Nyangana area is ninety percent unemployed. They have small farms and cattle but that is basically all they have. There are no jobs.

In 2010 a man from a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Windhoek was invited by local government officials to give a series of workshops to the youth of Nyangana, which he did for free. However, he asked the parish to provide him lodging and food for the days he was in Nyangana. The youth center was used for the sessions, which were attended by about thirty young men and women, aged about 22 to 27. The series of eight workshops were advertised as training sessions aimed at establishing a local youth constituency, which would in turn enable these young adults to get special training for possible job prospects in the local area. He used power point presentations and gave clear organized talks, but the focus seemed to be more on political education, according to Beaudry, rather than on anything practical that might help the youth get jobs. Beaudry commented that “this man thinks that political education is necessary, including to get a job. Maybe in the long run these sessions will pay off.”

As of May, 2010, Beaudry had been in Nyangana four years and was preparing to finish his assignment there. In his four years he built up the youth facilities tremendously. In addition to a large youth center that had a stage for performing dramas or concerts, there were a basketball court, a pool table, table tennis equipment, a television with a DVD player, and a small library. He also had begun oversight of construction of a large library facility for the girls’ hostel. This library was not completed when he left Namibia in mid-May, 2010, but was well underway. Another Peace Corps volunteer was coming in mid-2010 to work on a local AIDS project and live at the hostel. Beaudry hoped that through her Peace Corps connections she would be able to bring in books cheaply for the library.

In 2010 Beaudry had been doing youth work for twenty-four years, since he first went to Kenya in 1986. He felt it was time to go into a different type of ministry and sought out a special sabbatical program in the U.S. that would test and improve his skills and aptitudes, enabling him to return to East Africa for another assignment. In 2011, he was assigned to Mwanza, Tanzania.

Both Gruenke and Beaudry commented on some of the unique challenges and difficulties of working in Namibia, and in Nyangana. As all the Maryknollers who worked in Namibia have noted, this country suffers from extreme economic and social inequality and is still structured around the racial barriers created by apartheid. South Africa ruled Namibia (called South West Africa at that time) for seventy years, from 1920 to 1990, and the interpersonal and communal lessons dictated to Namibia’s peoples are not easily reversed in just two decades of independence, especially when the government is dependent on the existing economic structures (mining, large commercial ranching/agriculture, commercial fishing, and the port at Walvis Bay) for its revenue. While the exact interplay between the colonial/apartheid legacy of a hundred years and the personal characteristics of the various Black African peoples of Namibia can not be fully determined, the Maryknollers who worked in Rundu and Nyangana have commented that the Kavango people seem cold and unwelcoming to visitors – so unlike Bantu people in East Africa. This was most unsettling to Beaudry, who had worked in

Kenya for almost twenty years and found the relationships with the African people to be the most rewarding aspect of his years there.

The two Maryknoll Brothers also referred to the huge challenge of trying to create a self-reliant church as appearing to be almost insurmountable. They and the Maryknoll priests who work in Windhoek all feel that the German missionaries who have served in Namibia since the end of the 19th century have overused European money in building up the structures of the Namibian Church, all with good intentions and some obviously good results. But this use of money seems to have created in the views of Black African Catholics an impression of the Church being a wealthy foreign institution that will permanently bring in money from overseas to keep the institution going. The parochial Church also seems to be primarily a service-station type of Church, one that goes around providing sacramental services (confessions, Mass, baptisms, communion), for which the local people are not expected to financially support. The Brothers believe that Fr. Charles is trying to slowly change this situation but that the impressions and expectations imparted over a hundred years will not easily be remedied.

The dearth of diocesan priests is also a huge problem, which has been commented on above. The Oblates, unfortunately, recruited for their own society rather than for the dioceses. Both Brothers are used to the practice in East Africa where the missionary societies set up local diocesan seminaries early in the twentieth century and now have thousands of diocesan priests and many African Bishops who are not members of religious orders. The Missionaries of Africa made this a priority and Maryknoll followed their model in Tanzania. Despite some tensions in the 1970s and 1980s over transfer of power, the wisdom of creating a self-reliant, local Church has been made manifest in the last two decades. Gruenke believes that there are enormous difficulties ahead trying to move in this direction in Namibia. At the same time, the Diocese of Rundu is ahead of every diocese in East Africa in the ordination of married, permanent deacons and the granting of permission to local people to be Eucharistic ministers in their small communities.

Gruenke also remarked on a particular problem regarding the huge church plot at Nyangana, much of which is unused. To start a church agricultural project on this land would require at least one person with expertise in farming and fluent in the local language to work full-time, a person (or persons) who at present is not available. Since Kavango land is communal, it can not be sold, and in any event it was a gift from the Chief. To give the land to a few individuals as a grant would most likely cause jealousy and enmity in the local community. However, in the meantime, according to Gruenke, the parish possession of a large amount of unused land is creating increasing anger in the local Kavango community. And it should be noted that the population in the local Nyangana area is overwhelmingly Catholic. A hundred years ago land pressures were not paramount; today the land on the parish plot is viewed as prime agricultural land.

In observing the weighty challenges facing establishment of an indigenous, self-reliant Church, one can pessimistically decide that the problems are unsolvable or respond with Christian hope and optimism that the Holy Spirit will enlighten leaders and people of good will to find the ways forward. The noted scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann has written: faith is the belief that God is revealing new problems, new contexts and new solutions to humans and all creation; hope is the choice to seek out and understand what God is revealing; and charity is the recognition that those with whom we

are currently at odds are the ones with whom we can and will cooperate and collaborate to implement the solutions.