

MARYKNOLL IN AFRICA  
CHAPTER TWELVE

SHINYANGA DIOCESE, EASTERN PARISHES  
FROM 1961 TO THE PRESENT

GULA, ST. FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH:

In Volume Two, Chapter Five on the original six parishes in which the Maryknoll priests started work in Shinyanga in 1954, its work in Gula was covered from pages 359 to 372. It took the history up to October, 1963, when Fr. Walt Stinson was transferred to Ng'wanangi-Nassa and Fr. John Lange was assigned to Gula as pastor in Stinson's place. Stinson had an unpleasant confrontation with people at a government meeting, unfortunately instigated by Stinson. The government officials brought a charge against him to Fr. Charles Liberatore, the pastor in Nyalikungu at that time. (Bishop Edward McGurkin was in Rome for the Vatican Council, so apparently Liberatore was administering the diocese in McGurkin's absence.) Stinson moved to Ng'wanangi but in 1964 he returned permanently to the United States.

Lange had been ordained in 1958 and worked on Promotion in Minneapolis for four years. In 1962 he was assigned to Tanzania, to Shinyanga Diocese, and studied Kisukuma at the so-called language school in Shinyanga Town, in the house adjacent to the rectory. Fr. Castor Sekwa was assigned to be Lange's tutor in Kisukuma. Due to the preponderance of Kiswahili in the town, Lange and Sekwa moved to Mipa for some months and then to Bugisi, where Sekwa was needed to cover the parish while Fr. Dick McGarr was on leave. When McGarr returned, Sekwa was transferred elsewhere and Lange remained in Bugisi with McGarr.

Thus, in October, 1963, Lange was the one who was available to move to Gula. He was alone in Gula for part of the time over the next two years. In 1964 Fr. Felix McGowan came but he did not stay long and returned to the U.S. in 1965.

In August, 1963, as was noted in Volume Two, there had been a change in Head Catechists at Gula. Natalis Ndaki, a long-time catechist, had retired and was replaced by Matteo Masele, who had just finished the two-year course at Mipa Catechist School. Masele and his family became very close friends of Lange. One of the first things that Lange and Masele did was introduce the new catechetical textbook for teaching religion to catechumens, as Lange explained.

We had few qualified catechists except for Masele, so we organized a training program for the volunteer catechists. Six of them went to a one-week course given by Fr. Bob Julien at Sayusayu. We followed this with two one-week courses here at Gula, conducted by Matteo.

The volunteer catechists were instructed in the use of the text called "The African Way to Life," translated into Kisukuma. This was a departure from the old method of catechism questions and answers. For all these men the transition was difficult, but gradually they caught on and even welcomed the text, which outlined each lesson, from introduction to practical conclusion.

In addition to instruction in the art of teaching, a more important phase of leadership training was introduced, which included the Christian teaching on family life, the Christian attitude on progress, and the Christian perspective on money and its use. This required a lot of personal attention from Matteo and myself. Many times we ate at the catechist's home and sometimes we stayed overnight. After a few years we noticed a change in the volunteer catechists, who were the local leaders for the Christians and catechumens. It is the catechist who makes or breaks an outstation.

Masele also led the catechists' monthly meeting at the parish and he basically ran the catechumenate. In the mid-1960s Lange was still learning Kisukuma and he did not consider himself a good teacher at that time. Thus, Lange depended very much on Masele as his right-hand man. Lange paid Masele a full-time salary and also bought him a motorcycle, possibly the first one to do this in Shinyanga Diocese, so that Masele could go around monitoring the manner in which the volunteer catechists were teaching.

In the early to mid-1960s Maryknollers were decentralizing their parishes and especially the catechumenates. When Lange arrived in Shinyanga Diocese the White Fathers' system of *siku jose*, i.e. having catechumens from all the outstations come in to the parish for a month a year, over three years, was still in place in Gula. Lange decided, with the help of Masele, to have the *siku jose* in each outstation. Lange explained this in a diary written in April, 1966.

After two years the sacrament course in outstations is in full gear. Each of Gula's fourteen outstations will have its own one month's course, taught by the volunteer catechist. Only seven of them are qualified to teach the course, assisted by Masele and me, so we will have the course for one month in seven places and the following month in the other seven.

The home catechists in the other seven places will audit how this course is taught, and each will also teach one period a day. This apprenticeship form of training is even more valuable than the organized one-week course at Gula that we conduct from time to time.

I pay the volunteer catechists four shillings a day (57 cents). Teaching the catechumenate takes them away from the farm work that they have to do and I cannot expect them to teach for nothing. The other services they do are volunteer: teaching the people on Sunday, general leadership of the whole community in regard to faith, and time spent at teachers' training courses.

When interviewed many years later, Lange said that Gula had over thirty outstations, a discrepancy in the number that is not easily reconciled. Subsequent priests who worked at Gula also said there were over thirty outstations. Most likely the fourteen outstations mentioned in 1966 were the larger places where the catechumenate was taught, each with one or two smaller places where Mass would have been celebrated, monthly or as close to it as possible. Lange said that one of his most important practices was to take Mass safari trips to outstations, staying overnight in two of the places, and reaching three places in all to say Mass and handle other matters. Gula was a huge parish territorially, but was later divided up to create new parishes. In 1966 Lange stated that

two of the outstations had more people attending Mass than Gula, where the parish center was located. In the five years he was in Gula, Lange built cement block churches in several of the large outstations, notably at Imaleseko and Mwanhuzi. Imaleseko also had a well-constructed house for the catechist. Later when Mwanhuzi became a parish a much larger church was constructed.

As was noted in Volume Two, the small commercial village of Lalago was three miles away (another example of the White Father practice of not locating parishes in towns). It was inhabited by a majority Arab-Muslim population, with whom Lange had good relations, as they handled much of the business for the parish, but he did not seek out personal friendships with any of them. Lange likewise had only business relations with government officials, although these relationships were courteous and friendly.

In 1966 Fr. Tom Gibbons came to Gula. He had been in Kilulu with Fr. Don Sybertz up to 1965, when Gibbons went on furlough in the latter months of that year. On return to Kilulu in early 1966 he found Sybertz going on furlough. Due to some personal health issues, it was deemed that Gibbons not live alone and he was transferred to Gula. In 1967 it became necessary for Gibbons to leave Tanzania permanently, due to recurring bouts of health problems. Gibbons was never interviewed for the history project and he wrote no diaries from Gula.

In 1968 Lange was going to the United States for furlough and he was assigned to the Promotion Department again up till 1973. Before he left, Fr. Tom McDonnell was assigned to Gula as Assistant Pastor. It was about that time that the move to having parish councils was taking place in Maryknoll parishes, but Lange did not remember having started one in Gula by 1968.

With Lange leaving Gula Fr. Don Sybertz was assigned to be the new pastor of Gula, a place where he was to remain up till 1980. In late 1968 McDonnell went on home leave and when he returned in 1969 he moved to Mwamapalala Parish. In his place Fr. Bill Gilligan came to Gula in 1969, after he had finished language school in Musoma, learning Kisukuma. Gilligan and his classmate Herb Gappa were the last two newly ordained Maryknollers assigned to Shinyanga Diocese to learn Kisukuma at the language school. All subsequent Maryknoll priests and Brothers coming on first assignment to Shinyanga learned Kiswahili. However, a few Maryknoll priests who knew only Swahili went later to the language school to learn at least some Kisukuma.

Gilligan went on furlough in 1971 and Sybertz was assisted for some months by Fathers John Ganly and then Phil McCue. Both had gone to Musoma to learn Swahili, after which they came to Gula. Sybertz took several renewal programs and it is likely that in 1971 he was away from Gula for a number of months. In 1972 both Ganly and McCue were assigned to Sayusayu Parish. Gilligan came back from his furlough in 1972 and went to the language school for a few months (whether for an intermediate updating in Kisukuma or take Kiswahili is not known), after which he moved to Mwamapalala. Neither Gilligan, Ganly, or McCue was interviewed for the history project.

In 1971 Fr. Carl Meulemans was assigned to Tanzania, beginning in September, 1971. He had been a teacher at Maryknoll seminaries since his ordination in 1960, but in January, 1971, the decision was made to close Glen Ellyn (the three high school seminaries had already been closed in the 1960s), so Meulemans decided to go overseas. After inquiries he chose Tanzania. He studied Swahili at the language school, went for

one month of practice in January, 1972, at the parish in Shinyanga Town, and then was assigned to Gula with Sybertz. They made a very good team as each had gifts that complemented the other's gifts.

The program that Lange had followed was continued by Sybertz and Meulemans, namely going out to outstations for a three or even four-day weekend. If they went together they took Sybertz' Volkswagen, carrying many implements needed for staying overnight two or three nights. The large centre where they were staying would be scheduled to have Mass on Sunday, but in the other days they would celebrate Mass in smaller outstations. Another task was to meet with the catechists of the smaller places to plan with them the homilies they would be giving at the Service without a Priest at their respective places on Sunday. The people of the centre would provide the priests with food. On Saturdays they would also meet with the Centre Council to discuss developments, plans, or any difficulties in the church community.

In the 1960s Mass was still celebrated at Gula every Sunday, but by the early 1970s this program was changed and Gula was treated as just one other big centre, with Mass only one Sunday a month. Another major change: Sybertz did not have large amounts of sponsor money and he insisted that the people collect the money to build their outstation churches. If he thought the people needed some help he would provide the corrugated metal sheets for the roof. In the 1970s a parish council was started, along with the councils in the centres. Sybertz said that even prior to having formal parish councils decisions would not be made without consulting the people for their opinions.

One constant in Sybertz' pastoral ministry was to listen to people talk to him about their personal matters at the church on Sunday mornings. Fairly large numbers of people would come and sometimes there would be long lines of people waiting to talk to him.

Some of the weekend Mass safaris were in separate places and Sybertz and Meulemans each travelled alone. If so, Meulemans went by motorcycle. He had a small, light-weight motorcycle that could be pushed through the mud if the rain had been heavy – or even lifted over a very muddy spot or when traversing a river. After some months during the rainy season he discovered that the wheels of the small motorcycle got clogged with mud, and he decided to buy a larger motorcycle, called a mountain bike.

The priests would return to Gula on Sunday afternoons. Meulemans said that his typical schedule during the week was to go to Nyalikungu, also called Maswa, on Monday for shopping and to get mail; Tuesday was a free, personal day; and Wednesday was the day for planning the weekend's safari to outstations. Usually, the trip to the outstation took place on Thursday.

In the rainy season, they were hindered from making too many trips, especially to distant outstations. Meulemans usually practiced his Swahili during periods of heavy rain and taught Sybertz Swahili.

In the 1960s and 1970s Maryknoll arranged a number of seminars on topics about Vatican Council inspired changes and renewal in the church. The invited theologians would go from diocese to diocese to present their talks at central places; at first this was Buhangija in Shinyanga Diocese. Later Wira became the locale for seminars, although at least one seminar was held at Mwamapalala. The White Fathers also scheduled special

seminars of several days' duration in Tabora, and Sybertz and other Maryknollers went for these. Sybertz tried to attend as many seminars as possible.

In addition to what was offered in Tanzania, Sybertz also took several renewal programs in the United States and elsewhere, such as the Mission Renewal Program, a program in the Philippines, and the Vatican Two Institute at Menlo Park, California.

In 1973 the catchword being bandied about in Shinyanga Diocese was teamwork. Already a team parish had been formed in Ng'wanangi-Nassa, and Meulemans was in discussion with other Maryknollers to form a team ministry based in Mwamapalala, which would serve three parishes. As a result in mid or late 1973 he moved to Mwamapalala.

At the same time the three priests stationed in Ndoleleji began discussions with Sybertz about establishing more teamwork between these two parishes. The priests at Ndoleleji were Sybertz' classmate Dan Ohmann, Ken Thesing, and Dave Schwinghamer. The practical effect of this discussion was to establish a catechist training course for three months at Ndoleleji, for catechists from both parishes, with the priests sharing teaching duties. They also met regularly to discuss common pastoral approaches. Out of their discussions it was decided to open a new parish at Mwanhuzi, an initiative agreed to by Bishop McGurkin.

In 1974 Sybertz went on furlough and while he was in the United States the others decided that Sybertz would be the best person to be the new pastor of Mwanhuzi Parish. The new parish was established in 1975. Fr. Dave Schwinghamer was assigned to Gula as pastor in place of Sybertz. Schwinghamer had originally come out to Tanzania in 1969 as an OTP student and in 1970 he worked in Komuge Parish in Musoma Diocese, followed by six months in Ndoleleji Parish in the first half of 1971. He was ordained in 1972 and returned to Ndoleleji, where he continued working until 1975, when he transferred over to Gula.

In 1974, in addition to furlough, Sybertz took the Mission Renewal Program. At the end of it, during Christmas time, he and an SMA priest went to Goshen, New York, for a two-week charismatic renewal event, where they experienced a group of people living in community and sharing goods in common. On return to Tanzania Sybertz thought it would be worthwhile to start a small community of men similar to what he had experienced in Goshen. Thus, he gathered together about five or six men, mostly catechists, who would do a lot of things in common. He lived at the rectory but met with the men most days, as he explained.

We would pray together. We had a field and we'd farm together. Most of them were catechists and we'd do apostolic work together, such as visiting, starting Small Christian Communities, and working with them in the village of Gula.

Even though he had become the pastor of Mwanhuzi he continued living at Gula, in the rectory with Schwinghamer, but meeting with his semi-religious community every day. It was only after some years that he moved to Mwanhuzi, to which he transferred this community. In Mwanhuzi he lived with the men in the same house and shared their

lives completely. The men would do the cooking. However, after some time this attempt at forming a community did not work out. Sybertz went on home leave and while he was gone some of the men brought women to the house for overnight stays. Sybertz thought their behavior was not setting the kind of example of Christian life he was intending, and he disbanded the group. Eventually, all of the men got married and remained active in the church. Most of them, in fact, continued on as catechists.

[Editorial note: the Small Christian Community model has proven itself the most suitably adapted to inculturating and deepening the faith of Catholics in East Africa. A spiritual commune made up of non-married young men was inevitably doomed to fail.]

Schwinghamer remained as pastor of Gula up till 1979, when he went to the United States for higher studies, and later to do Promotion and Mission Education for some years. Although he was interviewed for the history project he did not discuss his four years as pastor of Gula. Presumably the parish work remained similar to before: Mass safaris to centres and outstations; meeting with catechists, the parish council, and the centre councils; teaching catechists through the teamwork approach of three-month training courses at Ndoleleji; overseeing the catechumenate; and carrying out the sacramental duties in the parish.

In 1979 Sybertz was still living at Gula, assisting SMA Father Bill Opferman to take over the parish in place of Maryknoll, even though Sybertz' official assignment was pastor of Mwanhuzi. They were expecting Maryknoll Sisters to come from Mwamapalala to Gula to set up a parish dispensary/health clinic.

In November, 1979, Maryknoll Sister Marion Hughes and Lay Missioner Liz Mach visited Sybertz in Gula, saying they were ready to move into Gula. But their house wasn't ready. At the same time, they had to leave Mwamapalala, because the IHSA Sisters were moving in. Sybertz found an innovative solution: he said that the two women should move all their belongings to Gula, to the rectory, and live in the rectory for the month it would take to prepare their house for residency. Mach commented, "That was a very powerful experience. Don is very much into communal prayer and that was very good for us. I also experienced a different type of mission from Ndoleleji, where there was a lot of development going on. Gula, with Don, was more into the pastoral side of mission."

Hughes and Mach ran a small dispensary at Gula, although Mach said that at first the government did not want one at Gula as it had a dispensary/clinic at Lalago just three miles away. The purpose of Hughes and Mach's work was to train government health workers in running medical facilities at Gula and in villages. Mach left in March, 1982, and was assigned to do Promotion in the United States for three years. Sr. Li Ching Chin and Associate Maryknoll Sister Jordan Schaefer, a Franciscan, both came to do pastoral work. The Maryknoll Sisters completed their work in Gula in 1985. In 1984, Hughes was forced to work almost full-time in the famine relief program.

It is not clear which year Sybertz actually moved permanently to Mwanhuzi. The Maryknoll address book lists it as 1981. After Schwinghamer and Sybertz left Gula no other Maryknoller has been assigned to this parish.

The SMA priests took over staffing of Gula in 1980. Opferman was joined by SMA seminarian, Mike Moran, who later went to Liberia. It is not known for how many years the SMA priests staffed Gula Parish.

It is still a large, active parish. There is a dispensary/maternity clinic on the compound. The C.D.N.K. Sisters have a convent at the parish and in addition to pastoral work they operate a nursery school.

#### MWANHUZI, ST. PETER THE APOSTLE PARISH:

In the link for Shinyanga Diocese in the Tanzania Episcopal Conference website, this parish is spelled Ng'wanhuzi, following correct Kisukuma pronunciation, and it is stated that the parish was officially established in 1974. This was the final parish established by Bishop McGurkin before he resigned in January, 1975.

As was noted above, Fr. Don Sybertz, the first pastor of Mwanhuzi, did not move there right away, waiting until either 1979 or 1980. Even after moving to Mwanhuzi he did not have a cook or eat food at the rectory. At first he lived with the semi-religious community that he had started in Gula and the men did the cooking. When this group was disbanded, Sybertz began eating his main meal in the evening at a local café, called a hoteli in local parlance. Parishioners did not think this was right, however, and they began to prepare his meals, including something simple for breakfast and a cooked meal in the evening.

The daily schedule for Sybertz in Mwanhuzi was similar to what he had been doing in Gula – going out to outstations every day, to visit people, attend meetings (by the mid-1980s these were Small Christian Community meetings), and say Mass. Mass would be started in early or mid-afternoon, and often at mid-day Sybertz would be given food at the main village. His *modus operandi*, in other words, was to live a simple style of living that could be easily followed by African diocesan priests who would follow him.

At the same time, he began building both a rectory and a large church. These funds did not come from the diocese, but from his own personal source of funds. Thus, he felt it only right that the parishioners would take care of his food needs. The people also helped with the church building, such as hauling water, transporting the mud blocks from two miles away, and even doing the construction itself, including on the roof. Sybertz further explained:

It's a big church because this is a District now and there is no other church in the whole District. This is the only parish in the District. Bishop McGurkin had started parishes in Ng'wabusalu and Imaleseko, but they are closed now because there are not enough priests to staff them. This is the only District in Tanzania with only one parish.

Mwanhuzi was not a large town in the 1970s but after becoming a District center it began to grow. It eventually became a fairly large town. It is located on a main road, albeit a gravel rather than a tarmac road, between Maswa and the southern part of the Serengeti on the way eastwards to Arusha. A hospital, police post, and schools sprang up, followed by commerce. A bank was opened and also a cotton ginnery. Since that start in the 1980s it has become the major commercial center for the far eastern parts of Shinyanga Region. When he was interviewed in 1989, Sybertz said that he was serving about 25 villages scattered throughout the parish.

Even in 2016, as already noted, Shinyanga Diocese is hampered by a shortage of priests from opening new parishes. Since Mwanhuzi was opened in 1974 the only other parish initiated in the far eastern area of Shinyanga Diocese has been Bukundi (cf ahead).

In 1982 Fr. Dan Ohmann, the pastor in Ndoleleji, had been alone for several years in a far-flung parish with many different kinds of pastoral and developmental activities going on, and he found himself suffering from burn out. He went back to the U.S. for six months to get rejuvenated. While there Sybertz also went to the U.S. for furlough and they talked with each other by phone. Sybertz was alone in Mwanhuzi and finding it difficult to properly serve a huge parish by himself. They both decided to live together in Ndoleleji, where they could pursue their common spiritual goals, have a place to relax free from the pressures of parish administration, and play tennis – for enjoyment and exercise. Ohmann returned to Tanzania in late 1982 and Sybertz moved down to Ndoleleji.

However, Sybertz continued on as pastor in Mwanhuzi, despite it being some forty miles from Ndoleleji by the short route, passable only during the dry season. In rainy months he had to take the long way, which was 65 miles, and even then there was a risk of getting stuck in thick mud somewhere.

From 1980 to 1982 Fr. Ken Thesing was living in Ng'wabusalu, attempting to bring it up to the point of being erected as a parish. But in 1982, when Ohmann left Ndoleleji, Thesing had to move to Ndoleleji to be pastor. Likewise, attempts to make Imaleseko a parish also failed. Thus, these two big sub-parishes remained under Mwanhuzi. Regarding his time in Ng'wabusalu, Thesing said the following.

It was different (than Ndoleleji and Shinyanga Town) in that I spent more time by myself and with the local people. That is when I began to learn a little more Sukuma and to understand more. I could hear what quite a few people were saying and I would respond in Swahili. In turn, they could understand what I was saying.

Most of my overnight time was spent in the homes of catechists or people, such as parish council leaders, whom I got to know. I spent a lot more time in overnights and less and less time with other expatriates. I had deeper relationships with people there because I spent more time with them.

When Thesing moved to Ndoleleji at the beginning of 1982, Sybertz had to serve both Ng'wabusalu and Imaleseko, in addition to Mwanhuzi and all the other outstations of Mwanhuzi. Fortunately, Imaleseko was only about fifteen miles from Ndoleleji, which Dan Ohmann began serving in 1983.

Sybertz had good catechists at all the places, which numbered between 20 and 25 outstations in 1989. They had all been trained in short courses at Ndoleleji (the courses for catechists, which ranged from three weeks to three months, will be covered in greater detail when we look at Ndoleleji Parish) or at the three-month courses at Mipa. Most of the outstations had two or sometimes three catechists. In 1989 one of the catechists who had taken the two-year course at Mipa, Daudi Masanja, was still teaching in Mwanhuzi Parish, at an outstation. This may indicate that by the 1980s the concept of a salaried, full-time, head catechist in a parish had been phased out, perhaps due to lack of funds.

Since Sybertz first arrived in Tanzania in 1955 he had worked in four parishes up till he retired from being pastor in 1990: Busanda, Kilulu, Gula, and Mwanhuzi. In all these places one of his avocational pursuits was compiling proverbs, stories, and songs, as a means of delving deeper into Sukuma culture and worldview. Sybertz said that in fact he had been interested in proverbs even when he was a youngster growing up in the United States. In Shinyanga Diocese he learned that Fr. George Cotter also had this same interest in proverbs and once when both were in the United States on vacation or furlough they spent time together in New York putting together everything that they had compiled. They also contacted Fr. Roland Murphy, a famous scripture scholar, for input on how to relate Sukuma wisdom with biblical teachings. Sybertz said, "I'm interested in these proverbs and stories not only for themselves, but as a method of teaching the Good News."

While at Gula and continuing on at Mwanhuzi, Sybertz set up a regular schedule of interviewing Sukuma elders, even including Chief Majebera (who, of course, was no longer officially a Chief in the 1970s and 1980s). Sybertz described his method of operation.

I did this for many years, getting together with the old men maybe twice a month. They'd come in, we'd cook for them, and we would sit around and talk, trying to find the meaning in the different proverbs, stories, or customs.

Probably it is the grandmothers who hand on the proverbs and stories, when they are sitting in the home with the children. Parents would do this, even the fathers, but the grandmothers are the ones who spend the most time with children.

In the mid-1980s he started collaborating with Fr. Joe Healey, who had been assigned to Iramba Parish in Musoma Diocese from 1982 to 1987, and then moved into Makoko in January, 1987. Healey also had a great interest in African cultural wisdom and all the traditional means of expressing this wisdom (cf Volume Three on Musoma Diocese). As of 1989, Sybertz had already published one book on Sukuma proverbs in collaboration with Healey and was on the verge of publishing a second book, on Sukuma stories (called *hadithi* in Swahili).

There were other aspects to this endeavor, as he explained in April, 1989.

We are starting a group in Mwanhuzi to write a history of two famous Sukuma men, named Sitta and Nyindwa. Sitta lived in Kilulu and we've got the whole history from the time he was born till the time he died. I intend to get out of the responsibilities of being pastor so that I can spend more time with SCCs, learning more about these stories, the customs of the people, and how to relate them to the faith of the people in the SCCs.

This would be a far more profitable use of my time than in building churches.

Sybertz had taken trips to Bujora, near Mwanza, where a famous White Father, Fr. David Clement, originally from Canada, had built a Sukuma museum and cultural

centre that specialized in Sukuma dances and putting on plays. The centre was also interested in all forms of Sukuma culture and wisdom. Several clan leaders from Mwanhuzi Parish were sent by Sybertz to Bujora in early 1989. They brought back what they had learned and gave talks to the people in the parish. As a consequence, the Easter celebrations at Mwanhuzi in 1989 were fully inculturated, including a Way of the Cross passion play, celestial Sukuma melodies throughout the whole weekend, and a Resurrection Play at the altar on Easter Sunday. Additionally, according to Sybertz, Sukuma priests' curiosity was piqued regarding their culture and its adaptation to church and liturgical use.

An outgrowth of the Bujora Cultural Centre was the establishment of a Research Committee, headed by White Father Max Tetrakis, with whom Sybertz regularly communicated and met with on occasion. Tetrakis even came to Ndoleleji at least once, for several weeks, to confer with Sybertz.

In 1992 Sybertz retired as pastor of Mwanhuzi. He did this so that he would have full opportunity to pursue his interest in proverbs and culture, through Small Christian Communities. Sybertz thought that the fervor shown by the initial wave of Sukuma adult baptisms had waned.

Ten or fifteen years ago, if you started a Small Christian Community, you would have many more people responding. There are more people falling away than it would have been years ago. So, things are more difficult for us priests now days.

We're trying to make the Church what the Church should be. For me, the way to do this is through the Small Christian Communities. That's where the faith of the people is really deepened.

To replace Sybertz, an Associate Maryknoll priest, Fr. John Zeitler, who had been working in Old Maswa Parish for two years, was transferred to Mwanhuzi and named pastor. Zeitler remained at Mwanhuzi for about two years and then returned to the United States. After he left, diocesan priests took over pastoral responsibilities for this parish.

In 2013 another Maryknoll priest, Fr. John Lange, came to Mwanhuzi to be assistant to the pastor. He had been working in Nairobi for some twenty years, but had begun in East Africa in Shinyanga Diocese in 1962 – after four years on Promotion. As we have already seen, he worked in Gula Parish for six years. He later worked in two other parishes in Shinyanga Diocese and then went to Dar es Salaam for about fifteen years, prior to moving to Nairobi in 1992.

The final interviews for the history project were done in 2012 and so we have no direct information on Lange's work in Mwanhuzi. It is known that he built several churches in outstations and was of great assistance to the pastor, Fr. Dominic Makalanga. Makalanga was transferred to a different parish in 2015, after the new Bishop, Liberatus Sangu, came in February, 2015. As of 2016 Lange is still serving in Mwanhuzi Parish with the new pastor and he has hopes that he might be able to contribute to the construction of a Catholic secondary school at Mwanhuzi. He has built large churches in the major centres of Mwanhuzi and is also contributing much of the money to build a larger church at Nyalikungu Parish, where he had worked back in the mid-1970s.

### NDOLELEJI, MARY QUEEN OF AFRICA PARISH:

In 1967 the two priests who were the first ones to serve in Ndoleleji, Frs. Tom Keefe and George Cotter, had departed, Keefe to the staff at the major seminary in New York and Cotter to Salawe Parish, and they had been replaced by Fr. Dan Ohmann. In Volume Two, this is the point at which the history of Ndoleleji left off. Ohmann had been ordained in 1955 and then worked on Promotion in Minneapolis for nine years. Finally, he was assigned to the missions, to Tanzania, and he arrived at the language school in 1964 to study Kisukuma. For two years he worked in Chamugasa and Malili Parishes and then came to Ndoleleji in February, 1967.

Ndoleleji is at the far eastern end of Shinyanga Region, only some thirty miles from the territory of the semi-nomadic pastoral Wataturu people and about fifty to sixty miles from Lake Eyasi, one of the salt lakes of the Great Rift Valley. [Editor note: much more will be said about the Wataturu. For now, we just note that this will be the spelling of this ethnic group used throughout this history. There are various versions of how the group's name is spelled and pronounced.] As it was necessary to cross the Mangu River to get to Ndoleleji, this mission at times had the feeling of being at the end of the planet. We owe the following description to Herb Gappa, who was in Ndoleleji in 1971.

It is open range territory, hot and dry, and a real introduction to the Tanzanian countryside. It has dust storms, wide open spaces, soil erosion, failed crops, and wild animals (in the early 1970s). We used to go out hunting in the Wataturu country and at that time there were lots of woods out there. Ten years later there were almost no woods left.

When I arrived there were also windmills and block farms, and at Ndoleleji many development programs, run by an assortment of lay missionaries. With all the development, machines, people and programs, it was very different from Sayusayu.

At that time, according to Ohmann, Maryknoll had about forty priests and Brothers stationed in the twenty parishes of Shinyanga Diocese, with almost all the priests doing parochial work except for perhaps two doing diocesan administrative duties. The emphasis was on building parish structures, starting and serving outstations, and managing an extensive catechumenate. He said that most parishes had from 100 to 200 adult baptisms a year, plus another couple of hundred infant and school child baptisms. In Ndoleleji the catechumenate had been reduced to two years, utilizing the RCIA program that had come from the second Vatican Council.

Ohmann had only one month to learn from Tom Keefe what had been transpiring in Ndoleleji before Keefe left for his long, six-month furlough (which turned into a long stint in Maryknoll seminaries in the U.S.). Ohmann said that in addition to the pastoral work, various forms of social development had become hallmarks of the mission efforts in Ndoleleji. Keefe had brought out a man from Holland, Frans Vander Laake, who at first ran a mechanics/carpentry trade school and later extended his contract by two years to assist Ohmann in water development. In the early 1970s, with money from American sponsors, Ohmann and Vander Laake put in seven windmills to pump clean water from

underneath rivers to large storage tanks from which Sukuma could inexpensively buy water for household use. After this Vander Laake, who had married a local woman, remained in Tanzania doing water development sponsored by the Dutch government.

The purpose of the mechanics training school, funded by Misereor of Germany, was to train men to repair tractors in the far eastern part of Shinyanga Region. A survey had identified 150 tractors working in that area and the closest garage was in Shinyanga Town, fifty miles away.

There were many kinds of development that took place at Ndoleleji, such as medical work, community development, women's development and agricultural development, and Ohmann estimated that in the years from 1967 to 1989 there were close to twenty lay missionaries, from Europe and the United States, who worked in successive years in Ndoleleji. He said that in any given year there were two to four lay missionaries resident in the parish.

In 1967 Ohmann celebrated Mass at only four places, which he called outstations at that time but were later called Centres. These were Ndoleleji itself, Mhunze, Masanga, and Mwamalasa. Such few Mass centres meant that Christians had long distances to travel. Thus Ohmann decided that the most effective way to build up a strong church in all outstations was to train families to be true Christian families. While on Promotion in the U.S. he had become impressed with the Christian Family Movement and was convinced that "to have a lasting Church we had to have Christian families. And to have influence in local communities, the families had to have training."

About a year after he arrived at Ndoleleji, Ohmann had ten houses built on the very large mission compound, each large enough to accommodate a family. He brought a very good builder and foreman named Moyo from Malili Parish, where Ohmann had first come to know him. Moyo worked under Brother George Carlonas, who preferred Moyo, a Tanzanian, to the Indian contractors who had a tendency to skimp on cement and other construction necessities in order to increase their profit from contracts. After Moyo moved to Ndoleleji he stayed on for many years.

Either in 1969 or 1970 Ohmann initiated a one-year course at Ndoleleji. In the first year all ten families were catechists' families, who moved into the newly-built houses for a full year, although one was dismissed during the year as he was not cooperating with the program. It was at the time of Ujamaa, just after the Arusha Declaration, and Ohmann was convinced that the communal style of living would take root in Tanzania. One thousand acre block farms could be plowed by tractors, enabling a community to produce a much greater quantity of produce than by the subsistence method of farming by hand.

The program at Ndoleleji for the year included lessons in Christian living on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and farming in communal, block farms, utilizing modern agricultural techniques, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Ohmann was alone to teach the first year and he made sure he set aside Tuesdays and Thursdays for this purpose. The first lay volunteer to oversee the agricultural program was Joe Rott. When he moved into Shinyanga Town to manage the diocesan program he was succeeded at Ndoleleji by Jurgen and Rose Feldhaus. All three were from Germany. Communal farm work for three days was obligatory but on Saturdays they could farm on their own individual plots. At the end of the year they had a celebration and discussion of their

opinions of communal farming, given that President Nyerere was strongly pushing Ujamaa. Half were in favor and half were opposed. This was the first inkling for Ohmann that the Ujamaa system might not find a favorable response in Tanzania.

Several other Maryknollers were stationed at Ndoleleji with Ohmann: Fr. Lawrence Louis for part of 1967, Fr. Ed Schoellmann in 1968 and 1969, and Brother Kieran Stretton in 1968 and 1969. None of them was interviewed and none assisted with the Christian family course, which may have begun after they had left Ndoleleji. In 1969 Associate Maryknoll Father Paul Archambeault, of the Diocese of Portland, Maine, was assigned to Ndoleleji and he did some teaching in the course. At the end of 1970 he transferred to Malili Parish to help found what he hoped would be a team parish, covering Malili and one or two other places. In January, 1971, an OTP seminarian, Dave Schwinghamer, came to Ndoleleji from Komuge, and in the first half of 1971 he taught almost all the classes in the family course – doing a superb job, according to Ohmann, and freeing Ohmann to do other things. A trained catechist at Ndoleleji, Richard Ndaki, also taught in the course for two years.

#### Brief comment on Overseas Training Program (OTP):

Schwinghamer was part of the second group of OTP students to go to Tanzania, along with George Delaney. The first two had been Pete Loan and Harry Coffey. The two-year program had been structured to spend the first four to five months in language school, learning Kiswahili, one year at Komuge, teaching at the Catechist Training School and doing parish work, and then spend another six months somewhere else. They were supposed to have some type of formal supervision, somewhat along the model of CPE supervision, but Schwinghamer said that this was the weakest part of the program. Their supervision came almost completely from the older priests they were living with, in long evening conversations in back porches before supper and continuing on during and after supper. Schwinghamer said that these conversations partly resembled what later came to be called Pastoral-Theological Reflection (PTR), but on a completely informal basis. Diocesan meetings were also supportive and informative, enabling the OTP seminarians to listen to many perspectives on mission. Later, those who were in the first groups to come on OTP, including Tom Tiscornia and Randy Madonna, who came in 1970, and possibly those who came in 1971 and 1972, met and offered substantive suggestions on how the program could be improved. Ever since its inception in 1968, the Overseas Training Program (OTP) has had students, including Brothers, come almost every year, to both Tanzania and Kenya. OTP for seminarians and Brothers in Formation is still a constitutive component of Maryknoll seminary training and education.

Whereas Schwinghamer had no difficulty operating in Kiswahili at Komuge, as the catechist students were from many different ethnic groups, in Ndoleleji he was in an area that spoke only Kisukuma. He acknowledged that this had its problems, although it was less so at the course for families, as both the adults and children had gone through an educational system taught in Swahili only. Schwinghamer also noted that government meetings were conducted in Swahili, and those who knew only a tribal language were hampered in venues such as these.

Schwinghamer went back to the United States to finish his seminary education, was ordained in 1972, and returned to Ndoleleji in 1973 to 1974. In 1974 he was chosen to be pastor at Gula, in place of Don Sybertz, as we have noted above.

Regarding the course at Ndoleleji, Ohmann said that by the third year there were not enough families from the parish to fill out ten families, so he put out invitations to neighboring parishes. There were families from Gula, Wira and Salawe that Ohmann could remember, and maybe from other places as well.

After the family training course had run for three years the government requested use of the buildings, in order to run an agricultural school. This was supposed to be for one year only, but it ended up being six years. This was during the years of Ujamaa and villagization.

While Schoellmann was at Ndoleleji in 1968/69 he participated in the general pastoral work of going on Mass safaris to the sub-parishes but he concentrated on one particular Ujamaa Village, which was one of the original voluntary villages started shortly after the Arusha Declaration. Schoellmann was unfortunately never interviewed, so we don't have any information on his work or what might have been accomplished. In 1970 he was transferred to Busanda and made pastor there.

In 1970 the two priests at Ndoleleji were Ohmann and Archambeault. When Archambeault moved to Malili at the end of 1970, Fr. Herb Gappa was assigned to Ndoleleji from Sayusayu Parish, where he had been working for two years after finishing language school at the beginning of 1969. Gappa had been ordained in 1968 and came immediately to Tanzania, where he and his classmate Fr. Bill Gilligan studied Kisukuma. In 1971 Gappa was becoming somewhat comfortable in the language (and the Sukuma people were being treated to their language being spoken with a strong mid-western accent mixed in with Finlandian folk songs), but he was still learning. Even with language school, it takes a good three years to become fluent in a tribal language. As he did not know Kiswahili, he apparently did not take part in teaching at the course for the families of catechists.

Ohmann said that Gappa was very interested in evangelization, and Gappa elaborated on this:

It was normal at that time to be doing outstation work, to be getting catechists, and to be working with parish councils. Both Ndoleleji and Mhunze had active parish councils, which came out of the Bukumbi seminar study year.

You could call this the post-expansion period because all the parishes had been built. So, it was working with outstations and keeping them going. Even then Dan Ohmann was in touch with the Wataturu people, mainly through hunting, but contact nevertheless.

At that time we were running two catechumenates, one at Ndoleleji and the other at Mhunze. Mhunze was a large town with a cotton ginnery. Ohmann had already built a church there and the catechist there, James Nyangindu, was doing very good work. Nyangindu later became the head of the diocesan lay leadership program and eventually he joined government service as a member of the CCM Party.

Those were the two centres, each with its own outstations. I was at Ndoleleji for only one year, but I remember that on Christmas the church at Ndoleleji was packed.

I felt comfortable there because Dan's and my families know each other. I could get out and do things with my hands, drive a tractor or whatever. I was out with an awful lot of people. I did some development work, putting in an irrigated garden, and some things like that.

In January, 1972, Gappa was assigned to replace Fr. Bob Lefebvre as pastor at Mipa. Lefebvre had decided to go to the United States for CPE training.

In 1972 Ohmann was the only Maryknoller stationed at Ndoleleji, although there were several European lay volunteers living there. In 1973 this changed, with the return of Dave Schwinghamer to Ndoleleji and the assignment there of Fr. Ken Thesing, his first assignment in Tanzania after language school.

Thesing had been ordained in 1969, done Promotion for three years in Minnesota, and arrived at the language school in the latter half of 1972, where he studied Kiswahili. Thesing said that at that time Fr. Eppy James was also living at the sub-parish of Mhunze, serving five to six outstations. However, he seldom came to Ndoleleji, as it was more convenient for him to go into Shinyanga Town. There had been discussions of making Mhunze a parish, which for various reasons never happened. (In 2016 Mhunze was finally erected as a parish, with a resident priest.) At the end of 1973 Eppy returned to the U.S. for renewal programs and subsequently he went to Kenya to do further mission work. Thesing explained what he encountered on his arrival at Ndoleleji.

The plan of the parish was to get a Christian presence in more of the villages, to have a witnessing Catholic community in each village, even if small. The goal was not to convert everyone in the place, although we were not against conversions. But the goal was really to establish a Christian presence and to inculcate in these people a missionary outlook. The parish was structured around reaching a goal like that.

In addition to the pastoral goals, Thesing was impressed with Ndoleleji Parish's concern for basic human needs.

The country was in the beginnings of developing as a nation. The people were coming from a very underdeveloped, subsistence style of living, but were open to new ideas that we were bringing in, whether in agriculture, or health, or education, or in water development.

It seemed to me that this was an application of the Church being involved in the growth of the people. The encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* of 1967, had been for me a very important event and what was happening in Ndoleleji was a reaffirmation of what I had seen when I entered Maryknoll.

In the years 1973 to 1975 Thesing was not directly involved in the development projects, as he wanted to focus on pastoral work. He did go to observe or help with certain projects, such as those in water development. One involvement occupied him to a greater extent, doing farm work with the catechists of the school in their twenty-acre block farm, where they grew sorghum and cotton. Often in the late afternoon, Thesing had time to join them.

In the drought year of 1974/75, with its resultant crop failure, the priests of Ndoleleji participated to some extent in relief work, as Thesing explained:

We saw that the people had tremendous resilience. We wondered how they managed to survive, but they shared everything together; that was one thing. The government made a tremendous response that year. Food was brought into the area of Ndoleleji. We didn't have to bring in food, but just involved ourselves in the process of distribution, monitoring certain things and making sure people weren't gouged by high prices. We helped very poor people with money, because the food was sold, but at decent prices.

So, we had that experience and were confident that the government would really respond in times of crisis.

As we will see ahead, this was not the assessment of the government's response to the 1984/85 drought.

With regard to Maryknoll's response to the 1975 famine, Ohmann said that at a Maryknoll Regional Meeting it was agreed that each Maryknoll priest and Brother would forego one month's viatique and personal allowance and donate that money to a fund to be distributed to the poorest places. Some priests added on to this with their own personal money. The amount collected was matched by Maryknoll. From the total amount Ndoleleji received about \$2,000.00 to buy food and distribute it.

Ohmann added that in some cases people had money from sale of their cotton, but there was no food available to buy. Initially, the local government officials in Shinyanga Region had been slow to request food assistance, even though the Tanzanian government had seen the famine coming and procured some 50,000 tons of relief food. The Maryknollers contacted Catholic Relief Services in Dar es Salaam, which began sending food to the parishes in Shinyanga from the national resources.

Thesing valued the development and food relief work at Ndoleleji, but in his first three years in Tanzania his emphasis was on learning pastoral work. He said that they were slowly but steadily developing new Christian communities because of their intensive concentration on all the places outside of the mission.

I would have a one-day meeting each month with the catechist in each centre (sub-parish), going over the readings for the coming month and talking about pastoral issues and concerns. In the centre council meetings they would plan for the catechist or a few of the people to go out to one of these new villages and start to preach there.

It usually came about that among the newly baptized catechumens one or two men and a few women felt a call to be catechists. They felt a missionary call, which they expressed themselves, to go to a place where there were no Christians, live there with their families, and interest others in the Church. We would try to help them, by making sure they got involved in council meetings and catechist meetings, and to give them some support.

Also because Ndoleleji is a dry area there was a lot of movement of people to outlying areas that could be farmed. Some were Christian and they were

interested in forming a small community. Their goal was to get a catechist and start praying regularly. So, these were the processes by which new groups were started.

Ohmann commented on the growth of the parish. In 1967 there were only about 16,000 people in the parish territory, of whom about 500 were Catholic. The total population grew to 30,000 in 1970 and to 55,000 in 1978, according to official census taking. This growth was due less to child birth but to people moving into the eastern end of Shinyanga, to the District called Meatu, where Ndoleleji is located. Ohmann didn't say how many were Catholic, but according to Thesing the parish had about 100 adult baptisms each year, sometimes more. We can presume that by 1980, with the number of adult, school child and infant baptisms, that there from 3,000 to 5,000 Catholics in the parish.

Thus, by the late 1970s there were thirty outstations being served within Ndoleleji Parish, as Ohmann explained.

When villagization came in our goal was to have a kigango (outstation) and a catechist in every village of the government. That's why we ended up with thirty outstations because there were thirty villages in Ndoleleji Parish. [Editor note: twenty-nine others in addition to Ndoleleji.]

Other parishes had the same problem: Gula, Wira, Mwanhuzi, and Imaleseko. We got together at a deanery meeting and agreed that on the first week of every month we would take six men from every one of the five parishes, a total of thirty men. We also agreed that we priests would keep this week free of other parish work in order to come here to teach. It was also a nice way to bring the priests together.

To accomplish this, the priests of Ndoleleji needed to re-take possession of the buildings built by the mission but being used by the government. In the year 1977 or 1978 they told the government that they wanted the buildings back, in order to run this catechist training program. Not only did each village have a catechist but in most cases there were one or two assistant catechists, due to the desire of so many to assist in this work.

In addition to the more formal training that catechists got either at the interparish course or the three-month training at Mipa, assistant catechists were expected to participate in another program, which included the following components: attend the catechumenate, which was taught four times a year for a week or two, in order to observe how the older catechists taught; teach a class every two or three days, to get used to teaching; come to the planning sessions before the catechumenate began, in order to know the materials and books being used; have responsibility to teach one day a week back in their outstations; and occasionally lead the Sunday Service without a priest. Thesing stated, "It was a program of on-the-job training and working with the established catechist."

After about four years the one-year training course held at Ndoleleji for catechists from the three contiguous parishes had achieved its purpose and was discontinued.

Thesing commented that the parish was not able to give the catechists very much of a financial stipend, but that the catechists looked on their work as a vocation.

The older catechists would speak to the younger ones and say: “This is the reason why you have to maintain a certain lifestyle, fidelity to your wife and your family, and how you treat the other Christians. You are now an example for other Christians. It’s a vocation, not a job. It’s not something that you do for money, but out of your call by Christ. If you don’t feel that way, then you really shouldn’t be here.”

In 1974 Thesing offered to replace Fr. Mike Duffy as program manager of the diocesan agricultural program (cf Chapter 11), and for a year he spent weekdays in Shinyanga Town, returning to Ndoleleji on Thursdays or Fridays to be in the parish over the weekend. In 1975 he moved permanently into Shinyanga. By then, Dave Schwinghamer had moved to Gula, leaving Ohmann the only priest in Ndoleleji. However, Fr. Jim Lee was ordained in 1975 and came to Ndoleleji in 1976, where he stayed until 1981. In 1976 Dan O’Brien also came to Ndoleleji as an OTP student.

Although Lee was never interviewed, Thesing said that Lee thrust himself completely into the work of going to sub-parishes and outstations, and in teaching the catechists at the one-week sessions each month. By the mid-1970s the only Maryknoll priests in the Ndoleleji-Gula-Mwanhuji triumvirate who knew Kisukuma were Ohmann and Sybertz; the others had learned only Swahili, but all attested to being able to function in the national language, so prevalent it had become in Tanzania. Thesing briefly discussed this predicament.

When I got to know Don Sybertz and others who could talk on the level of parables or local sayings, those are the types of things that I never got into with the catechists. Mine would have been more of a functional conversation. Because I wasn’t using the indigenous language, even when talking about culture I wasn’t getting to as much depth as was someone who was using Sukuma.

In 1981, Jim Lee returned to the U.S. and joined the staff at the novitiate in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Some years later he left Maryknoll and was incardinated in the Archdiocese of Seattle, where he continues to be a priest (as of 2016).

O’Brien returned to Maryknoll and was ordained. He then joined the new Unit that had been formed in Zambia.

In 1975 Dan Ohmann talked about the agricultural and other development programs at Ndoleleji. He said that they were trying to persuade all the farmers to have their farms ploughed by tractor and then weeded with ox-drawn weeders. The advantages to this were being able to finish plowing earlier in the rainy season and plow more acres per household. The mission had a tractor and charged \$10.00 per acre, but Ohmann said that farmers could easily afford this with their increased acreage and production. Whereas doing the plowing and weeding by hand would enable a family to farm five acres at most, with tractors and ox-weeders they could farm fifteen to twenty acres. Only about five

acres of this could be in cotton; harvesting of cotton, which has to be done by hand, is so time-consuming five acres are all a family can harvest.

There were drawbacks regarding use of tractors, due to the increased price of fuel beginning in 1973, when OPEC asserted its sway over the world resulting from its control of prodigious oil reserves, and the never-ending increase in the cost of tractors, which Tanzania had to import from developed countries. Ohmann worried about dependency if Tanzania became overly reliant on tractors.

However, Sukuma farm plots tended to be small and scattered. Thus, Ohmann was in favor of the block farms being mandated by Ujamaa villagization at that time. Tractors could easily plow a 1,000-acre block farm, making block farms far more efficient for agricultural production. Cattle and oxen could still be used for other aspects of the farming.

Ohmann also discussed the erosion taking place all over the Ndoleleji area, which he blamed on small, individual plots. To maximize their plots the new farmers who moved in cut down all the bushes, causing topsoil to wash away when violent rainstorms came. This practice was exacerbated by allowing cows to roam freely, consuming most of the grass, which further contributed to soil degradation and erosion. He said that in the eight years he had been at Ndoleleji much of the topsoil had washed down into the rivers, which in turn had widened or changed course.

He talked about one village, called Sango, where the elders agreed to let Ohmann plow contour ridges along a distance of three miles, with the agreement that the people would plant sisal trees at the top of the ridges to hold the soil on the hillsides in place. Ohmann expected that the people would move into villages, leaving the plowed ridges for farming. Villagization was delayed in that area, people moved back into their individual plots, and that program did not fare as well as hoped.

As has been mentioned above, the Sukuma people in general were strongly opposed to villagization, and accordingly they were critical of the Church, which they viewed as supportive of Ujamaa and villagization. Ohmann had helped start communal farming in 1968. It had gone well and he was trying to encourage many other Sukuma to adopt this form of living and farming. Unfortunately, the forced villagization coincided with the bad drought year of 1974-75. People blamed the government, the Church, and witchcraft for their ill fortunes. The killing of certain women suspected of being witches increased at that time.

The other projects that had been started in Ndoleleji in the early 1960s, when Tom Keefe was pastor, also had mixed success. The mechanical and carpentry training courses had to be closed after a few years, as the local economy could not provide enough work for the trained young men to benefit. One product did become valuable – oxcarts. Each oxcart sold for \$200, and in 1974 about 150 of them were sold in the Ndoleleji area. One man was so skilled at making them that he moved into Shinyanga Town, where he found a larger market.

The priests and lay volunteers from Europe also introduced Friesian high-bred cattle to the area, to be interbred with local cattle. Pure-bred Friesian cows could not withstand the climate in Shinyanga Region, but when mixed with local cows the offspring produced greater quantities of milk. Similar efforts were done with goats.

They also introduced better types of seed. A neighbor of the mission bought a newly developed variety of sorghum seed and despite the lack of rainfall in 1974 he harvested twenty bags of sorghum from three acres. In 1975 people came not only from local areas but from long distances to buy this seed, which they called the 'priest's seed.' So, their agricultural program was having some successes.

There were cultural factors at play that Ohmann addressed. In subsistence culture a successful man does not invest his surplus into a better house, other material benefits, or to increase productive capacity, but rather into beer and food for community celebrations. He gains immense status and credits within a reciprocal society, which are prime values in a subsistence culture.

Ohmann felt that Ujamaa socialism allied itself well with the subsistence mentality. The community he formed in 1968 had invested their communal profit into a storehouse and later bought some Friesian cattle. The people also bought a grinding mill for \$2,000.00, with a loan from Ohmann that they paid back in a couple of years. Two American women volunteers, Barbara Bechtold and Connie Kreiss, had been doing women's development for several years and they helped the local women to start a café, where they sold mandazi (African donuts), and tea. The local women also sewed dresses and shirts, which they sold through the café.

The use of windmills to pump water from rivers to villages, including the mission compound at Ndoleleji, was begun in 1967, not long after Ohmann arrived there. Only forty people believed Ohmann's assertion that wind power really could push water up a hill over 100 feet high to a large reserve tank in the center of the mission compound 1,500 feet from the river (the Headmaster of the primary school thought this was folly). These people volunteered one hour each afternoon, four days a week, for nine months, to dig the trench for laying the pipe. Finally, in February, 1968, the windmill, which had been discarded by a Protestant Mission that had no further need for it, was put in the hole in the river. Water immediately began to fill up the storage tank, from which the people could fill up jerry cans to take home. This water was very clean and did not need to be treated, although the priests boiled and filtered the water for use in the rectory. As of February, 1975, that original windmill was still working, thanks to good maintenance.

Windmills as a source of clean, inexpensive water have been one of the hallmarks of Ndoleleji Parish over the decades. By 1975 eight other windmills had been installed, all providing clean water to villages. A windmill can produce about 3,000 gallons of water a day. As of 2012 there were twenty windmills located in twenty villages, all located along rivers. The rivers go very low or even run out of water in the dry season, but there is always water ten to twenty-five feet below the river bed. In his 2012 interview, Ohmann gave a short explanation of the advantage to this method of procuring drinking water.

You can't get water by drilling boreholes. The water is alkaline, too salty. Before we put in the windmills, the people used to dig holes in the sand in the river, but animals would also come to drink water at the holes, so you didn't know what diseases you would pick up from that water.

After the first windmill was put in, Frans Vander Laake took samples of the water to Dar es Salaam to be tested. The report came back that it was perfectly

fit for drinking, without boiling. The water in the river filters through the sand and becomes pure. At our river here, we have eight feet of sand on top of the well from where the water is pumped.

This past year there was an outbreak of cholera. The government closed all the cattle markets and some of the schools. But in all the villages where we have windmills pumping water to the village there was not one case of cholera.

There are two things that have had an unbelievable effect on eliminating infant mortality. One is the clean water that everyone is drinking. The other is the maternal/child health clinic that was started at about the same time we first put in the windmills. For the first nine months after a child is born it gets a series of injections, for polio, tuberculosis, diphtheria, measles and even cholera.

When I first came here the primary school was here. I went around to check on infant mortality and I estimated that only about one-third of the children lived. This area had one of the highest rates of infant mortality in the country. Now almost all of those children live.

Malaria is still a potential danger to children, but even this can be mitigated if mothers are taught preventative measures and how to administer basic forms of treatment to bring down the fever and rehydrate the child.

A modest amount of maintenance is required for each windmill and water storage tank. The tanks slowly silt up and need to be cleaned every year, every six months if those in charge of the windmill and tank will agree to do it. Sometimes a village waits several years and four or more inches of silt has accumulated, making it very close to the outlet valve, just six inches from the bottom of the tank. People have to pay a nominal charge for each jerry can of water, which holds about five gallons. The Sukuma people living in all these villages have no objection to paying this charge, in part because they have learned the health benefits of clean water. Money is needed for maintenance and paying someone to dispense water at the community water kiosk.

Attempts were made to introduce windmills to the Wataturu people, but their refusal to dig the trench for running the pipe from the windmill to the storage tank and absolute rejection of paying for water aborted the project right from its inception. Wataturu are among the most technologically undeveloped people and can not conceive of water having a monetary cost. Tanzania governmental offers to provide water to the Wataturu have encountered similar obstacles.

The cost of installing a new windmill, pipe, storage tank, and water kiosk for a village in 2012 was about \$10,000.00. Over the years money has been contributed from various benefactors in the United States and in other cases the people of a village have raised the money needed. In all cases, the people have to dig the trench for laying down the pipe.

Not long after Ohmann was interviewed in 1975 the government nationalized all the water sources in villages and the mission's intention to install more windmills was blocked. According to Ohmann, the water project collapsed and for fifteen years the villages had no water. This lasted until 1990, when the government again gave the mission permission to charge a fee for water. Money for the first windmill established in

1968 came from a donation from Ohmann's sister, in memory of her fifteen-year old son who was killed in an automobile accident. In the early 1970s and again after 1990 other donors also requested memorials, which Ohmann honored with plaques on the windmills.

In February, 2012, Ohmann had just received another \$25,000.00 and he put in an order for three more windmills. In the meantime, fifteen villages that did not have windmills yet were pleading with Ohmann to get windmills.

The windmill project has an overall board of local Sukuma people. Several men at the garage in Ndoleleji have learned the skills of providing excellent maintenance of the windmills. Ohmann has candidly informed the board that they must save money collected from kiosk fees in order to not only maintain the windmills but also replace older, unserviceable windmills with new ones. As this century unfolds, this will be a test whether the Sukuma people of Ndoleleji have the prudent foresight to plan for future contingencies.

In 1976 there occurred a first for both the Maryknoll Society and for Maryknoll in East Africa, the inauguration of the Maryknoll Lay Missioner Program and the assignment of Maryknoll Lay Missioners to both Tanzania and Kenya. As was seen in Volume One, Mike and Mary Mantey went to Kenya and Ndoleleji received the first three official Maryknoll Lay Missioners for Tanzania – Liz Mach, Mary Orth, and Jerry Hansen. The latter had already been in Tanzania for three years, working in Old Maswa in the Agricultural Development Program.

In 1975 Ohmann talked about the steps taken in Shinyanga Diocese and especially in Ndoleleji over the previous ten years that paved the way for Maryknollers in Tanzania to accept the contributions that laity could make in mission.

There were a few laity working for the White Fathers in another diocese, but other than that I don't know of any laity working for Maryknollers except for those working here. We started with four Peace Corps volunteers, then three from Germany, one from Holland, one from the United States, and two women from America. Then two years ago three young farmers from Minnesota came to our diocese. They fit in very well and made a good impression. That helped a lot.

It worked out quite well; everybody was happy; and there have been no problems. And their moral life has been good.

That's why the African Region passed unanimously in February, 1975, that we are going to be behind the Lay Mission Program.

Ohmann added that at first Bishop McGurkin of Shinyanga was reluctant to accept lay missioners, however when he saw what the lay men were doing in the agricultural field he changed his mind and became very supportive. Although Ohmann thought that Bishop Rudin in Musoma Diocese was also hesitant about lay missioners, there had been several lay volunteers in Musoma, such as Marie France in Nyarombo Parish in the 1960s and laymen doing agricultural work in such parishes as Iramba, Bunda and Komuge. It is true that it was not until 1978, two years after lay missioners went to Ndoleleji, that the first Maryknoll Lay Missioner came to Musoma, Richard Fedders to help at the Maryknoll Language School, followed in 1979 by Howard Engen, to teach in St. Pius Seminary, but Bishop Rudin was neutral with regard to lay

missioners, i.e. not opposed but not actively seeking. He left it up to those in pastoral or seminary work to put in requests for lay missionaries.

Ohmann also commented on some of the arguments being put forward in the early 1970s to oppose lay missionaries. One was that there was no social life in rural Tanzania, which would adversely affect the morale of young lay men and especially women. Another argument was that it would be better to hire Tanzanians to do the work rather than bring out people from overseas. Ohmann countered these with his contention that the presence of faithful, church-attending married couples and single men and women, who were committed to living out the gospel, made an immense impression on the Tanzanian people. "This interchange between one church and another makes the Church richer."

He also pointed out that there were certain advancements in the Tanzania Church that the American Church could learn from, such as the establishment of parish councils and the leadership roles of laity in many facets of church ministry and administration.

Liz Mach was interviewed in 1989 and spoke about how she went to Ndoleleji.

In October, 1975, Fr. Dan Ohmann made an appeal for Maryknoll in my parish in Pine City, Minnesota, and said he was also looking for nurses. I said to my brother that I was a nurse and could do it. I applied and in January, 1976, I went to Maryknoll, NY, for seven weeks for the orientation program. There were eight of us: five for East Africa and three for Peru, one of whom dropped out before going there.

We then flew immediately to Tanzania and went to language school, because we were already late for the course. While in language school we were told that we would be doing women's development work, to replace two American women volunteers, Barbara Bechtold and Connie Kreiss. Dan didn't think he would get nurses, even though that was his dream.

Fr. George Cotter, who was already helping missions to do project requests, came to the language school and then informed Ohmann that there were two nurses at the language school. He also said that this was the time to do a formal request for a maternal/child health clinic for Ndoleleji. Dan was thrilled with this. The project request was sent to CODEL in New York and was accepted. Maryknoll was a member of CODEL, an agency that funds medical work in undeveloped countries.

After language school we went for practice at two separate medical clinics: Mary (Orth) went to Kitale where the Maryknoll Sisters had a clinic and I went to Mwamapalala, to work with Sisters Katie Taepke, Marion Hughes, and Nuncia St. Pierre. After this we went to the Africa Regional Assembly in Nairobi, and finally in August, 1976, we moved to Ndoleleji. (In Nairobi, Mach and Orth were told bluntly that they were not allowed to enter the Maryknoll Center House. Some Maryknoll priests and Brothers in Kenya in the 1970s and 1980s were not yet willing to accept laity as having equal mission vocations.)

Our conditions in Ndoleleji were very good. We had a large cement house, water from the windmills, and there was a large irrigated garden on the mission compound. There were extra vehicles at the mission, and we never had a problem

getting one for the mobile clinics, usually the land rover. We got lots of flat tires, though.

We went out four days a week. We were covering about thirty-six villages at that time, and we set up a seven-week rotating schedule, i.e. getting to a village once every seven weeks. We had services for children from birth to five years old, checking them, weighing them and teaching good health practices to the mothers. We also gave vaccinations to the children. Pregnant women also came and we examined them, checked their blood and blood pressure, and provided general care. Again, a lot of teaching was included. We had a staff of four untrained Tanzanians who helped us in the clinics.

The dispensary had been started in the early 1960s as one of the Mary Mahoney Mother/Child clinics and as of 1967, when Ohmann arrived in Ndoleleji, it had seventeen beds in the maternity ward. A man named Alan Fue, originally from the town of Same near the Pare Mountains of northeastern Tanzania, was a Rural Medical Aid (RMA) and in charge of the dispensary, assisted by two other hired workers. Maryknoll Sisters never staffed this clinic, unlike most of the other Mary Mahoney clinics, but one Sister came to Ndoleleji every month to examine the women and infants.

In the early 1970s Fue went to Mwanza, hoping to get training to be upgraded to Medical Assistant (MA). The RMA who replaced him did not get along with the people of Ndoleleji and furthermore it was during the time of economic hardship, impeding people's ability to pay for medications and treatment. Bishop McGurkin expected the government to nationalize all medical institutions and that the Church would no longer be allowed to operate clinics and hospitals. Thus, Ohmann closed the dispensary. As there was a government dispensary four miles away and a larger health clinic twelve miles distant, he thought that people could find treatment elsewhere. However, the parish council wanted the dispensary kept open, which Ohmann agreed to if a dispenser could be located. Fue agreed to come back and the dispensary was re-opened. Fue remained at Ndoleleji up to about the end of 1987, and during that time the clinic continually grew larger.

To assist him he started a program of hiring five girls who had just completed Primary School (Standard Seven) each year. The government had a program of giving exams to Standard Seven girls and those who passed were taken into government service. As the girls at Ndoleleji had a full year's experience, almost all of them passed and obtained government employment. Ohmann said that at times staffing of the clinic became difficult, so this was one means by which it was always staffed.

In addition to Orth and Mach, other lay missionaries came to Ndoleleji to do medical work, especially Dr. Tom Temme from 1985 to 1988, and also nurses Judith De Christopher and Joan Sharkey from 1987 to 1991. From 1980 to 1983 John and Dianne Mistelske administered the catechist training school at Ndoleleji. In the 1990s there were other lay missionaries at Ndoleleji, but not specifically for medical work: Eric and Margo Cambier, Alejandro Bermudez-Goldman, and Dan Griffin.

Mach said that their mobile clinic work brought many benefits to the people of Ndoleleji.

The biggest thing was measles. If measles came into a village it could kill one to three children in a family. Disease has added complications in Africa, because they are not equipped to handle the bronchial infections. Two years after starting the measles vaccinations we could see the results: very few deaths. And it was documented by the Tanzanian government. We also did polio vaccine and BCG for tuberculosis. We also went out to the Wataturu area and the women would walk ten miles to bring their children in. We built up tremendous trust because if we said we would be there on a specific day we would be there.

[Note: please refer to Volume Three, Chapter Ten, pages 265-266, on Nyamwaga Parish and on the double benefit of vaccinations, in both creating great trust of Catholic-run medical clinics and on the life-saving role of vaccinations, such as measles, polio and diphtheria.]

Since Alan Fue was competently managing the clinic, Mach and Orth did not have to do much at Ndoleleji, concentrating on their mobile trips to villages. However, Mach was requested at times to assist with difficult births, as the clinic had no midwife.

The two American women, Bechtold and Kreiss, had taught two Tanzanian women, Anastasia and Susanna, in women's development and Ohmann asked Mach to work with them, sort of as their supervisor. The two Tanzanians used to teach three-month courses for women, and often came to Mach in the evening to check their lesson plans for the following day. The women's development course covered many topics, such as child care, health, cooking, nutrition, sewing, simple bookkeeping, and even public speaking, something inconceivable for rural Tanzanian women with minimal education. Mach supplemented the course by teaching health to the women. When not teaching the course at the mission, Anastasia and Susanna went out to nearby villages on a small motorcycle they had use of, to follow-up on what was taught in the course. They also provided one-on-one advice to women leaders and women catechists. Mach commented, "They were two fantastic women."

Mach and Orth also gathered together a group of women to read the upcoming Sunday gospel, discuss it, and practice reading it out loud in front of the group. They helped prepare one woman to give a homily and one Sunday they got the priest to agree to let this woman preach at a service without a priest instead of the catechist. She preached for only about seven minutes, versus the usual half-hour or more by the catechist, but after the Service all the women congratulated her on a very good sermon. Mach concluded, half-joking and half-scolding, "The catechist got very upset because she had done a very fine job. We never had the opportunity to have a woman speak again."

In mid-1978 Mach and Orth went on furlough. Mach was also asked to represent the Lay Missioners at the Maryknoll Sisters Chapter. Two women lay missioners went to the Sisters Chapter and two lay missioner men went to the Maryknoll Society Chapter. One important agenda was to determine the Lay Missioners' status within Maryknoll. The program was affirmed and put financially under the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers, although the Sisters could request lay missioners. Several lay missioners were assigned to staff the program in New York. It was a first step in making the program independent.

Orth completed her contract in 1978. Mach returned to Tanzania later in 1978, went to the language school for a two-month refresher course and then was assigned to Mwamapalala to work with Sr. Marion Hughes in the clinic there.

In 1981 Jim Lee returned to the United States for his new assignment at the Novitiate, leaving Ohmann alone in the parish. The deprivations, hardships and stress of living in rural Tanzania began to seriously impact Dan Ohmann's personal and physical health and in 1982 he experienced symptoms of burnout. He was due to go on furlough in June of 1982 but moved it earlier to March. He requested time in the United States to address his stress and get rejuvenated, living at his home in Minnesota for six months.

With the departure from Ndoleleji of Lee in 1981 and Ohmann in 1982, Ken Thesing was assigned by the Bishop to be pastor of Ndoleleji. After completing his work at the diocesan agricultural program in 1980, he had gone to a large sub-parish of Gula Parish called Ng'wabusalu and had tried to build it up to become a parish. When he moved to Ndoleleji in 1982, the efforts to make Ng'wabusalu a parish were discontinued.

Around September or October, 1982, Ohmann phoned his classmate Don Sybertz, who was also on furlough in the U.S., at his home near Boston. Sybertz acknowledged feeling the same symptoms of stress in trying to administer the large parish of Mwanhuzi by himself. At the same time Ohmann received a letter from Thesing saying he was worried about Sybertz, who was spending more time at Ndoleleji than Mwanhuzi. Ohmann made a suggestion that they both move into a house, previously used by Jim Lee for spiritual reflection, where they could live together and form a mutually supportive spiritual community. Sybertz agreed and even though he continued to be pastor of Mwanhuzi up till 1990, he stated that this arrangement of living at Ndoleleji was the only way he would agree to continue as pastor of Mwanhuzi. They both returned at the end of 1982 or beginning of 1983. Ohmann said that he would not be pastor and that Thesing would be recognized as the permanent pastor.

Sybertz and Ohmann began living at the house, which belonged to the mission, and remained there until 2015. Their practice was to live in Ndoleleji for three days each week, for their own peace, quiet and communal reflection. On Thursday or Friday they would go out to their places of pastoral outreach, Sybertz to Mwanhuzi and Ohmann to Imaleseko, returning on Sunday afternoon or Monday morning.

At first, people came around to ask them questions but Ohmann told them to see the pastor. Eventually, after not too long, the local people realized that neither Ohmann or Sybertz was going to make any decisions regarding parochial matters in Ndoleleji. Likewise, neither had anything to do with agricultural or other development projects, until Ohmann resumed involvement of installing windmills in villages beginning in 1990. In 1990 Sybertz retired as pastor of Mwanhuzi, in order to devote his full attention to publishing books of Sukuma proverbs and other forms of Sukuma cultural wisdom.

When Thesing arrived back in Ndoleleji in February, 1982, one of the matters he focused on was financial self-reliance, as he explained.

I noticed in later years (i.e. late 1970s and early 1980s) that there was a tremendous spirit of self-reliance in the parish. When I got back as pastor in 1982 I spoke with the people about stressing self-reliance. We already could see that

the number of Maryknoll priests was not increasing; it was decreasing, in fact, and our priests were getting older. I said that the Bishops in Mwanza and Tabora had announced that if a parish could not support an African priest then that priest would be transferred to another parish that could.

We initiated a program of giving for the support of a priest and the people were very generous. Parish income, even though those were years of famine and not good rain years, increased appreciably each year. So, they were making very honest attempts to try to be self-reliant financially.

Thesing talked in an interview in 1989 about his perception of the change in the purpose of mission from the first twenty or so years after the origin of Shinyanga Diocese and its purpose in the 1980s.

When I first got to Tanzania (in 1972) the goal of the missionary was one of establishing the Church and at that stage of history it was involved with starting many projects. We needed buildings and facilities for people to sleep overnight, dining facilities, places to wash, and classrooms. We had agricultural projects, water projects and a dispensary. This meant a large compound, someone to administer the compound, and people hired to help with the work.

On the other hand, I see a role for just getting out and being among the people. This way you have time to get grounded in good cultural formation, and to talk to people about their religious values, what their traditional religion is, what they believe, what draws them to Church, and what they see happening with their young people.

These kinds of questions you have time to explore when you are out in the village experience, because you are not constantly tied up with huge administrative tasks, running a huge compound, and overseeing projects. Because the Church is established we are now in a different stage in which the missionary fits into the local Church.

Not only Thesing but many of the Maryknollers, in both Shinyanga and Musoma Dioceses, were uttering similar comments as they reflected on their purpose and goal in the Tanzanian Church in the 1980s, given that there were local Bishops and more and more African diocesan priests taking over the key parishes in the respective dioceses. Two other factors strongly influenced them: the incompleteness of the evangelization and catechetical efforts, and the almost insurmountable difficulties of making socio-economic projects self-reliant and sustainable. Beginning in the 1980s there was movement away from starting new projects and from emphasizing parochial administration, to a concentration on faith deepening and enrichment, primarily through Small Christian Communities. More will be said about this below, but first a major crisis was about to hit Tanzania that would consume the time and energy of most Maryknoll priests in Shinyanga Diocese for almost two full years – namely a major drought from early 1983 to the beginning of 1985 and its ensuing severe famine.

Just before Christmas of 1982, Thesing was joined by Larry Radice, an OTP student who had previously worked in Malaysia with Muslims. Given this experience he

had hoped to either go to China, to work with non-Christians, or go to the Coast of Kenya, where he could again engage in some form of ministerial presence with Muslims. However, he was assigned to Tanzania and after language school he was assigned to Ndoleleji. He arrived just as the TEFO Program in Zanaki was concluding and the decision had been made to discontinue with this program in the Region.

Radice struggled with learning Swahili, because he had come down with malaria at the beginning of the course and was never able to catch up with the progression of the lessons. He said that this difficulty was compounded by going to a strictly Sukuma-speaking area.

Thesing said that this was the first time he was a supervisor for an OTP student, but saw himself more as a work supervisor, as Radice had a spiritual director, whom he would visit with every month. In Thesing's view, the tasks of OTP were to understand what mission was, Maryknoll's role in mission, what the Tanzania Region was trying to accomplish, to learn language and culture, and to attain pastoral skills such as teaching in schools and in the catechumenate. Radice readily participated in whatever activities were taking place in the parish, such as catechists' meetings, outstation Masses, or parish council meetings.

There were other Maryknoll seminarians and Brothers on OTP, in both Tanzania and Kenya, and on occasion they would meet for short seminars led by various Maryknollers on specific topics.

Radice said that he also started a tree nursery and spent much of his two years at Ndoleleji trying to impress on the local Sukuma people the importance of planting trees, a matter of critical necessity during the drought years of 1983 to 1985. He explained, "During the famine time, when crops failed, you could see how degraded the land had become. So, we began discussing the implications of cutting down trees, and I became interested in planting trees."

Several months after Radice arrived at Ndoleleji he and Thesing realized that there was a serious crop failure in the first half of 1983, as Radice narrated:

Ken had the foresight to see the signs of the weather and predict a year ahead of time that crops would fail. He initiated a response that literally saved hundreds of people's lives.

Thesing narrated the history of observing the unfolding crisis and how the diocese responded.

In 1983 we had an almost total crop failure. We had very poor rains, although different parts of the parish got a better crop than others, but in general a very poor harvest, only a partial harvest. People went outside the parish searching for food and bringing it back on bicycles, ox carts, or a few could rent trucks. So, in 1983 food was brought in and we got through the crisis.

In the fall of 1983 the rainy season started out very bad in November and December. By January and February of 1984 we could see that it was going to be very bad. Around the beginning of April, 1984, I wrote a letter to the Bishop and to the Maryknoll Regional Superior, stating what my observation of the situation

was and how much food I thought would have to be brought in just to Ndoleleji, because there would not be another harvest until approximately April of 1985.

Not long after that I was having lunch with Bishop Sekwa in Shinyanga and I mentioned that after Mass in one of the villages several days before I was given *uji* (porridge) for lunch. The Bishop just stopped and asked, “This is all you had for the meal?”

I said, “Yes, but that’s not strange. That’s all I’ve been eating for the last couple of weeks every place I go.” Our custom in Lent was to go to every place for Penance and Mass in preparation for Easter, and I said that whether it was at noon or late in the afternoon, *uji* was all I was getting for food.

And that’s when he said, “We really have a famine!”

This is the incident that triggered a response in him. It wasn’t my letter, but it was relating this human incident. He said, “This is a famine, because if our Sukuma people are giving the priest only *uji*, then it means they have no food in the house.”

Within a week we received a pastoral letter from the Bishop saying that feeding the hungry would be the pastoral priority of the Diocese, taking precedence over everything else we were doing.

A month or so before that the priests from the parishes that would be most affected by the famine came together and drew up plans for procurement and distribution of relief food with Catholic Relief Services (CRS). As 1984 was a leap year, Ohmann was able to remember that the meeting was held on February 29<sup>th</sup>. By then it was clear that there was not going to be a harvest. Ohmann said that they wrote to their Senators in the United States, to CRS in Dar es Salaam, and to Jesuit Relief Services. Fr. Aloys Balina, who had many contacts in government service (his sister was a top official in the CCM Party), spearheaded the effort and went to all government officials including the Regional Commissioner. CRS personnel came up from Dar es Salaam to Shinyanga and canvassed the whole diocese, ascertaining the amounts of food that would be needed. They also made appeals for assistance to the United States. The decision was made to utilize the Catholic parishes as local distribution centers, as they already had effective networks throughout their parishes through the Catholic village councils, and priests were viewed as trustworthy handlers of food and money.

Thesing himself, though, did not remain in Ndoleleji to oversee food distribution in this parish. Since 1975 he had been on the Regional Council and in 1984 he was elected as one of Africa’s representatives to the Maryknoll General Chapter. Subsequently, he was elected to Maryknoll’s General Council for a six-year term (which turned into twelve years, as he was elected Superior General in 1990). Thus, Ndoleleji needed someone else to be pastor.

Fr. Jim Travis was ordained in 1967 a diocesan priest in the Archdiocese of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, but in 1972 he joined Maryknoll as an Associate Priest, working in the Philippines for five years. After returning to Minneapolis, he actively engaged in issues of human rights, justice and peace, based at the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota. In 1980 he decided to become a permanent Maryknoll priest and went to Maryknoll, NY, where he obtained a Masters Degree in Theology, focusing

on faith and justice. In 1981 he was assigned to Tanzania and studied Swahili at the language school, after which in 1982 he began his ministry in Shinyanga Diocese. In early 1984 he took a refresher course in Swahili and was assigned to Mwamapalala and then Ndoleleji. When it became known that Thesing would not be returning to Ndoleleji, Travis was made pastor.

Travis was a friendly, garrulous mid-westerner, who understood farming, was familiar with machinery, and was a very good organizer. He came to Ndoleleji right when the famine relief program was building up a full head of steam. Ohmann said, "For Jim, this was the perfect spot for him. He took over the whole operation."

Travis went to Dar es Salaam and met the head of CRS, who was unfortunately moved shortly after that. But the U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania came to Shinyanga to see personally what the situation was. He immediately recognized how serious the famine was and sent an urgent FAX letter to the State Department, which led to ships carrying food to be diverted to Dar es Salaam. The first shipment was of cooking oil. In Dar es Salaam Travis was told that CRS would bring the food to Dar, but Maryknoll would have to transport the food to Shinyanga.

Before going on to relate how the food distribution was done in Ndoleleji, we should point out Travis's three objectives: 1) to maximize the quantity of food; 2) to increase capacity so that distribution would be efficient; 3) to ensure the most needy people received food relief. These are very worthy objectives, although Travis's methods to achieve them created difficulties for him.

When Travis took possession of the huge shipment of cooking oil, the first thing he did was go to the country of Malawi with it, sell it, and then with the money he bought five trucks back in Tanzania (whether three-ton or five-ton, was not stated). He was also receiving a lot of money to buy food, in addition to whatever relief food was coming in. Thus, he had sufficient capacity to ship enormous amounts of food from Dar es Salaam to Ndoleleji.

Some seventy tons of food came at first for Ndoleleji and the garage and other buildings were filled with food. Committees were set up in each village, made up of two Catholics and two other people from the village. Travis set rules that no salaried people would get food, such as government workers, teachers, businessmen and others. In addition, anyone who had at least four cows, which could be used for plowing once the rains came, would also be excluded from the list. Tens of thousands of cows died during the famine, leaving very few families with cows by mid-1984.

The first village set to receive food sent in a list of 675 families. But then Travis received a note from the Catholics saying that his rules were not going to work. They said that they could not object to what the other people in the village were insisting on, regarding names to be included on the list, because they had to live with these people. Travis went out on a Sunday afternoon and meticulously went over the list, paring it down to 250 families, and announcing publicly the revised list of names. All the government employees were eliminated from the list. Not only was Travis insistent that only the poorest receive food, but in any event there was not enough food for all the people in every village. Even the families that received food were given varying amounts dependent on the size of the family.

Travis obdurately followed this approach in the other villages, reducing the number of names by close to two-thirds and distributing food only to needy families, but in the process creating many enemies from among the influential people in the District.

The food relief program continued on through the rest of 1984, up till March, 1985. Rains were sufficient at the end of 1984 and in early 1985 the priests realized the famine relief program could soon be brought to completion.

Unfortunately, Travis's relations with government officials continued to be acerbic. He also had testy exchanges with Bishop Sekwa. Matters reached a head in late 1987. Bishop Sekwa notified the Tanzania Regional Superior, Fr. Ed Hayes, that Travis was being removed from Shinyanga Diocese and that Maryknoll should send another priest to replace him as pastor in Ndoleleji. Travis was assigned to Mugumu Parish in Musoma Diocese and then returned to the United States in 1989, where he worked for the Development Department for several years. Health problems prevented him from going back to Africa. In his later years he did pastoral work in Alaska and Tucson, Arizona, where he retired in 2002. He died in Tucson in January, 2015.

Although Travis's unbending views on unfairness and corruption led to difficult relations with some in authority, he made friends from among the Catholics of Ndoleleji Parish, especially those who were poor. One catechist, whom Travis carried on his motorcycle to the hospital, perhaps saving the man's life, called Travis a saint. Travis paid fees in high school for a boy, named Danstan Sitta, who later was ordained a diocesan priest in Shinyanga Diocese and became pastor of Buhangija Parish for a number of years. He made many trips to visit Travis in both Alaska and Tucson.

In December, 1987, Fr. Dave Smith had been happily working for two years in Nyalikungu Parish with Fr. Leo Kennedy when he was called to a meeting with Fr. Ed Hayes, the Tanzania Regional Superior. Hayes explained that there was an emergency at Ndoleleji Parish, which immediately needed a new pastor. While hesitant at first, Smith talked with Frs. Marv Deutsch and Dick Hochwalt, both Consultors of the Bishop, and they convinced Smith that he was ready to be a pastor. Smith commented in 1989 on what he perceived as the biggest problem he would face in Ndoleleji.

The scary part was that Ndoleleji was significantly different than Nyalikungu. Nyalikungu was exclusively pastoral work, whereas at Ndoleleji there had been a long history of development work. The mission compound is one of the largest in the country, with all sorts of things going on. We have the only bedded clinic in the diocese, capable of holding thirty people. We have sixty parish workers working on the compound. We have various projects or enterprises going on: carpenters, a welding machine, a canteen that serves people who come to the hospital, a power mill that grinds corn and sorghum, a sewing school that takes twenty students a year, a tractor that people rent, a parish office, a bookstore, gardens, and a pre-nursing program that teaches ten girls each year. The health clinic treats 25,000 people a year and it has a Maternal/Child Health clinic that sees 8,000 women a year. It is the only medical clinic in a 2,000 square mile area serving 50,000 people.

Everyone believes that the one in charge of all this is the pastor. So, it was quite a switch from the calm setting of Nyalikungu.

When Smith arrived at Ndoleleji there were about 2,000 baptized Catholics and another 1,000 preparing for Baptism. There were still thirty villages served by the parish, organized into four large centres. The largest was Mhunze, a small town with a cotton gin, followed by Ndoleleji itself, and two other places called Masanga and Mwamalasa. Compounding his overwhelming administrative tasks, he was the only priest for the parish. Although Ohmann and Sybertz lived at Ndoleleji, they were going to Mwanhuji Parish and the large Imaleseko Centre on weekends; after 1990 Sybertz took on responsibility for Imaleseko on weekends and Ohmann began his outreach to the Wataturu people (cf ahead).

With regard to mission compound administration, Smith made use of a novel tool, not only in rural Africa but in many other places of the world, namely a battery-powered computer. When he arrived at the end of 1987 the mission was still using kerosene lamps for light at night. However, in the early 1990s they installed solar panels on the roofs of the rectory, church and other buildings, and these supplied sufficient electricity not only for lights but also for appliances and a television. The parish also had a generator, which was run for a couple of hours in the evening. Between the generator and solar power Smith was able to charge the computer's battery pack.

In spite of whatever assistance he got from computerized administration, Smith still had to pay a monthly salary to all of the sixty workers. Actually, payment was made to the thirty workers at the Health Clinic by the hospital secretary and the parish secretary paid the thirty or so workers on the mission compound. Each month Smith sent to these two people computer printouts of what was to be paid. Every six months or so, Smith paid each worker himself, so that he could discuss with them any work-related issues they might have.

As he often went out to villages for pastoral or sacramental visits, which he considered the most satisfying part of his ministry at Ndoleleji, he put certain individuals in charge of the different entities at the parish. At the Health Clinic, there was a committee of four people appointed to oversee the work. The Maryknoll Lay Missioners, when they were resident at Ndoleleji, did not serve on this committee, as they wanted Tanzanian people to take responsibility for the development at the mission, although they did meet with the committee members on occasion to offer suggestions, for example on sanitation or better organization of tasks.

Smith was also reliant on lay leaders in the villages to promote Christian life. He said that "I energized the catechists and lay councils to become more missionary in their outreach."

A crucial aspect of Smith's ministry was to bring reconciliation to the parish, as he explained:

I came into a parish that was hurting spiritually. A lot of people were alienated from the Church, many people were very angry, and the government was suspicious of the Church. I was conscious of that and I set about trying to heal the hurts. I introduced myself to government leaders, from the head of ten households up to the District Commissioner. After two years I had visitors from

the Regional Government come and say they heard good things about me. So, I thought that things were going well in that area.

A more deep-seated hurt was with the Christians themselves. I made a great effort to go around to all the villages and visit people who had stopped praying the last few years. Slowly people have been coming and a lot of healing is going on. Some places hadn't had Mass in close to five years.

My usual routine was to go out four days a week, if there were not a lot of meetings or seminars at the mission. I would tell people that I am spending the whole day in the village. We would start with Mass, then visit the sick and any people who haven't come to church in a while. I would get together with a group of people just to get to know them. We would have a meal, discuss their problems, or discuss ideas about the Church and Christian life. I thrived when I went out to the villages.

Smith found the Sukuma people to be a gentle and peace-loving people. There was very little violence or theft, but on rare occasions there were spectacular robberies by armed bandits, sometimes leading to the murder of the victim. At the mission the houses of several teachers had been broken into and things such as bicycles stolen. Smith had the mission carpenters repair the wooden doors, making them very secure. He also met with the people of the village to discuss methods of improving security. One clever method was to have code words, in case bandits captured one person who was forced to take them to other houses and ask the owners to open the door. The code phrase would tip off the owners that there were bandits outside so that they would not open the door.

In 1989 Smith acknowledged that the far reaches of Shinyanga were still pre-evangelization territory, with Catholics comprising fewer than ten percent of the Sukuma population. However, by then the number of Maryknoll priests had dropped below twenty and there were only about fifteen diocesan priests. Smith hoped that as more diocesan priests were ordained, more Sisters came to do pastoral work, and lay leadership matured, the Maryknollers could discontinue parochial and administrative functions in order to devote themselves to what is called primary evangelization. (Cf ahead about the outreach to the Wataturu people by Dan Ohmann and Jim Eble.)

For one year Eric and Margo Cambier lived at Ndoleleji and Eric was able to help with much of the administration of the mission compound. In 1993 Associate Maryknoll priest, Fr. John Zeitler, was stationed in the parish. Following this, from 1993 to 1996 there were several diocesan priests who did pastoral work in the parish.

Before discussing the revolutionary transformation that computers brought to rural parishes in Shinyanga (and gradually to all dioceses of Tanzania), it is worth looking at other pastoral work that was taking place in Ndoleleji in the 1980s and 1990s. As mentioned before, when Ohmann and Sybertz began living together in a separate house on the Ndoleleji compound in 1983, they each concentrated on areas east of Ndoleleji, Sybertz in Mwanhuji and Ohmann in Imaleseko. Located about fifteen miles from Ndoleleji, Imaleseko was about halfway between Mwanhuji and Ndoleleji. Although covered from Ndoleleji in the 1980s, it was a major centre under Mwanhuji Parish.

Ohmann said that the territory served by Imaleseko sub-parish was about 35 miles long by 20 miles wide and had eight outstations under it in 1983. [Editor note: the priests did not use the term sub-parish. Ohmann generally used the words parish and parish council when talking about Imaleseko, although it was only a Centre under Mwanhuzi Parish.] For years there had been discussion to make it a parish, but as of 2016 this had not happened. Ohmann said that Bishop McGurkin in the early 1970s called Imaleseko, Ng'wabusalu, and Mwandoya parishes but that when Castor Sekwa became Bishop in 1975 his chancellor, Fr. Richard Hochwalt, stated that none of these three places had been officially erected as parishes. Thus, they remained major centres under either Gula or Mwanhuzi Parishes.

By 1989 Imaleseko had twelve outstations, as people, many of them not yet baptized, began coming together to pray every Sunday. Catechists were appointed, usually with the recommendations of catechists from other outstations or centres, and means were found to enhance the new catechists' knowledge of Catholic teaching and some semblance of good pedagogy in imparting this knowledge to adult Sukuma people. In Mwanhuzi, Sybertz met with his catechists every month for two days. In Imaleseko Ohmann met with all the catechists four times a year, for two days each time, but the catechists met on their own as a group much more often.

The twelve outstations were divided into three sections of four outstations each, and the catechists from each section met together very frequently. Ohmann explained further:

The catechists have a common bond, a fraternity not unlike the priests' fraternity, which is special. To improve the bond even more, we invited two trained catechists from Ndoleleji, Boniface and Rafaeli, to meet with them. They are still members of the Catechists' Yesu Caritas group that was started in the late 1970s by Jim Lee. They are still active in that group.

Ohmann explained that the catechists' group was separate from the parish and outstation councils. When the parish council met, the catechists would send a representative. The catechists were under the councils, although they had very important standing in the communities. The councils, however, decided on matters relating to fund-raising, buildings, Christians' volunteer work, and on which catechumens were ready to move to the next stage of the catechumenate or to be baptized. The councils also determined the stipends given to catechists.

Ohmann said that when the post-Vatican Council changes came in, particularly the mandate to have parish councils, there was some tension. In the pre-Vatican period the priest had just a few consultors, usually older men well-respected in the wider community (one of the original consultors at Ndoleleji was Chief Maximilian Shoka), and the catechists ran the outstations on their own. They were seen as representatives of the priest, and the priest's chief consultor in the outstation. Ohmann said that it took a long time for the catechists to relinquish their authority but that by the 1980s this had ceased to be a problem. Catechists realized that they were teachers, and preachers on Sundays, but not in charge of the outstation churches. In fact, this sharing of authority fits in with African culture better than the autocratic model of leadership.

The contribution made by a committed catechist is irreplaceable, however. Ohmann said that in 1986 they wanted to develop the outstations of Mwamalole and Bukundi, which were the furthest away. He asked two catechists from Imaleseko to move out there. One did not stay for very long, since he was a stranger in the area and never fit in. The other, named Joseph, moved to Bukundi, where he at first had only thirty people, only one of whom was a baptized Catholic, a school boy from Iramba. In just two years Joseph had made it a flourishing outstation. The agreement with him was extended to five years and he was sent to the one-year course at Bukumbi near Mwanza. However, on his return Joseph was asked by Ohmann to move back to Imaleseko. There were some intracommunal divisions in Imaleseko and the parish council there requested that Joseph come back, to help them reconcile the communities. At Bukundi another man was appointed as catechist. (Bukundi became a parish in 2010; it is on a major road through the Rift Valley and has a hospital and secondary school, plus other government offices. Cf ahead.)

Portraying Joseph's willingness to move back and forth as a paradigm, Ohmann asked the catechists to discuss at their next full meeting if other catechists would be willing to move, when requested by the parish council and the priest. He was not at the meeting, but he received word later that four of the catechists said they would be willing to move if so requested. Ohmann saw this as a good example of Sukuma laity responding to the call of mission.

As important as was the role of catechists, parish councils and outstation councils, Ohmann and Sybertz came to the conclusion around the year 1986 or 1987 that these structures needed to be complemented by another more basic structure at the local level – namely Small Christian Communities. They asked each outstation, particularly Imaleseko, which was quite large, to form SCCs. Within three years the number of SCCs in Imaleseko rose from four to nine. Consequent on this, the number of catechumens also increased, to the point that in 1989 Imaleseko alone had fifty baptisms. The structure of the centre or outstation council also changed; rather than being elected from the centre at large, the chairperson of the SCC would be the representative on the centre council. Regarding baptisms, the SCC would recommend the names to the council, which would in turn approve those accepted to be baptized.

Ohmann and Sybertz gave the following reasons for de-centralizing the churches into SCCs:

- they were smaller and more intimate
- people in the SCCs knew who deserved to be baptized, or who were not ready
- this structure enabled bottom-up decision making and therefore more participation by a broader number of people
- SCCs were seen as the most suitable locus for in-depth reflection and discussion of gospel values and how to inculturate them into the daily lives of Sukuma people
- Sukuma wisdom would illumine church teaching, making it readily understandable to Sukuma converts
- Sukuma forms of education, such as drama, story-telling, and proverbs could be incorporated into SCC meetings and liturgical celebrations
- SCCs were an effective group for engaging in mutual self-help and/or outreach to families in need

Ohmann said that SCCs had been started in the late 1970s but never really caught on, until a propitious event began in 1987, the Marian Year. Through discussions with the parish council (i.e. the Imaleseko Centre Council), it was decided that every SCC would meet once a week to say the rosary. Ohmann narrated the various activities that took place during the year.

I told them that for my part I would teach the whole parish the *Salve Regina*, which had been translated into Kiswahili by the Peramiho Printing Press. So, in every outstation that I went to I taught them this hymn. We had a seminar at the beginning of the year to learn Marian hymns; the choir spent a week learning them. During the year all the outstations learned these hymns.

I also recommended that one Sunday a month the Christians of each outstation not come to church but instead meet in the communities to pray, like the Christians did in the early days. I read to them from Acts of the Apostles, about the first Christians meeting in homes to pray, break bread, and sharing food and money. But the people were hesitant, because the outstation chapel had always been the foundation for everything.

The head catechist and I chose three places to start and organized a three-day seminar. We made use of materials from Lumko that Sybertz and I got during a trip to Botswana. (Note: Lumko is in South Africa, but its catechetical materials had been disseminated throughout southern Africa.) Later the catechist used the materials to give seminars on bible discussion.

We agreed to close the Marian Year on August 15, 1988, with a pilgrimage from all the outstations to a center called Mwamanongu. I started from Imaleseko, fourteen miles away, walking with about 60 adults, carrying a statue of the Blessed Mother. We brought our own food and stopped for lunch. We left at mid-morning and arrived just before sunset, reciting the rosary, singing and dancing all along the way. The first groups that arrived would hear other groups singing and go out a half-mile to meet them. When we arrived a huge group came out to meet us, all singing the Marian hymns, and they danced around the statue.

By nine o'clock all groups had arrived and we started Mass in the usual way. But instead of the readings we arranged to have each outstation act out one of the Mysteries of the Rosary, using the gospel text for the words. After the short drama we would sing one of the Marian hymns. We went through all fifteen Mysteries. People kept coming until in the end pagans outnumbered Christians by three to one. We finished at 1:00am, but they kept singing and dancing all night long. I lay down to sleep at 4:00am and slept about a half hour. The following morning at 8:00am we had a high Mass to end the Marian Year.

The people thought that was great and the parish council keeps asking me to do something like that again. This event is what really got the SCCs going.

There were other good results: marriages were blessed, more people began going to church regularly, and the number of catechumens and baptisms increased.

In 1989 Ohmann said that the Maryknoll priests were emphasizing Small Christian Communities but were not getting support from Bishop Sekwa. In general, the

Tanzania Bishops did not view SCCs as important. Sekwa was trying to get a seminary started for the diocese, in Shanwa, between Maswa and Sayusayu, and this was his focus. [The idea of a seminary did not reach fruition until long after Sekwa died. Mention of the seminary will be made when we write about Nyalikungu Parish.] There was some tension over the Bishop's apparent emphasis on hierarchy and clerical vocations, versus the Maryknoller's emphasis on lay participation and leadership in the church, epitomized by SCCs, but then Bishop Sekwa began experiencing serious health problems, which impeded his ability to manage diocesan affairs. His attention turned primarily to construction of the cathedral and other diocesan buildings.

In the 1980s Ohmann and Sybertz were also going around to outstations to show the movie "King of Kings," Cecil B. DeMille's silent film about Christ. They accompanied the film with Sukuma proverbs at various scenes, to highlight Christian teaching. They felt that this was an effective method of evangelization.

With regard to Imaleseko, as of mid-year 2016 it had a very large church built of cement blocks, a very good rectory and a cement house for the catechist. However, it had never been erected to be a parish. Presumably, lack of priests rendered it impossible to open new parishes – although Mhunze was erected a new parish in the year 2016. Imaleseko is under Mwanhuzi Parish, which has two diocesan priests in addition to Fr. John Lange. Lange has used his funds from U.S. donors to build large churches in all major outstations of Mwanhuzi Parish and to enlarge the church at Mwanhuzi.

In 1990 Ohmann decided to devote all his attention to the Wataturu people, as we will see below. That same year, Sybertz retired as pastor of Mwanhuzi and began full-time work collecting proverbs, stories and other types of Sukuma cultural expressions, and comparing them to biblical teachings. This also will be covered here below.

As noted above, Dave Smith introduced the personal computer to Shinyanga Diocese, first at Nyalikungu in 1985 and then Ndoleleji at the end of 1987. In 2003 he commented that perhaps eighty percent of Maryknoll priests, even in very rural parishes, were using computers. In the 1990s at Ndoleleji, Smith used his computer to not only organize the payroll and keep parish records, but also to order medicine for the health clinic.

Smith began early, in the 1970s, learning about this revolutionary new tool. He did his undergraduate work at Purdue University from 1973 to 1977, majoring first in high-energy Physics and then switching to Computer Science. At Purdue he came in contact with Maryknoll Fr. Phil Bowers, who was the campus minister. After Purdue, Smith went to MIT in Cambridge, MA, for his Masters Degree in Computer Science. He again established contact with Maryknoll, going over the Charles River regularly to the Maryknoll Promotion House in Chestnut Hill, a part of the city of Boston. He joined Maryknoll in 1979, going first to the Novitiate in Hingham, which moved to Cambridge before the end of the year. He did OTP in Tanzania from 1982 to 1984 and was ordained in June 1985.

When Bishop Sekwa realized Smith's proficiency in computer applications and how efficient the computer was for administrative tasks, the Bishop made Smith secretary of almost every diocesan gathering, such as for meetings, diocesan councils, and the priests' senate. Smith also taught other Maryknollers how to use the computer, as he narrated:

Computers are not difficult for me. Since college I have been intrigued by them. They can be a challenge but the kind of challenge that is a fun puzzle for me to figure out. I also enjoy helping others learn how to use them. Many Maryknollers started getting computers and asking me to visit them, to show them what to do. I was pleased because I have always realized that computers have a great potential for assisting the missions and the work we are doing.

Smith did acknowledge, however, tension in his heart, because the ministry he most enjoyed was going out to villages, to say Mass and to enter into a hut to share a meal and talk with the people. He also had a vocation club in the parish and he liked meeting with the young people who expressed such an interest. Several Catholics of Ndoleleji have become priests and Sisters.

In 1996 Fr. Leo Kennedy was assigned to Ndoleleji. Kennedy had been pastor at Nyalikungu in the 1980s, when Smith was at that parish, so they were now being reunited. Kennedy was unfortunately interviewed only once, in 1989, so we have no record of his five years at Ndoleleji. Kennedy stayed at Ndoleleji up to 2001.

Smith wrote that by 1999 Ndoleleji Parish was running smoothly. "I had a good crew of catechists, very good relations with all parish leaders, and the parish was well organized." He was finding parish work after twelve years routine and non-challenging. In 1999 the Regional Superior (Fr. John Sivalon, for the whole of Africa; in 1998 the two Regions of Kenya and Tanzania joined together to form one Africa Region) asked Smith to move to Dar es Salaam, in order to be the Region's Financial Officer, which required someone with computer skills. Smith agreed and moved to the Society House in Oyster Bay in Dar es Salaam in August, 1999.

Smith left three Maryknoll priests at Ndoleleji when he departed from there, although two were retired and doing other types of ministry. It was at this time that diocesan priests were given responsibility for parochial administration of Ndoleleji Parish. As stated above, Kennedy left in 2001, but Ohmann and Sybertz stayed living at Ndoleleji up to the year 2015.

One other Maryknoll priest was assigned to Ndoleleji Parish in 2009, newly ordained Fr. Hung Dinh. (Actually two other Maryknoll priests were also assigned to Ndoleleji, Fr. Jim Eble in 1989 to work with the Wataturu, and Fr. Ed Schoellmann in 2010 to build Bukundi Parish, but reports on their work will be written separately.) In this history we will use the name Hung, the name by which he is usually known.

Hung had been in Tanzania on OTP from 2005 to 2007, spending the full two years at Mabatini Parish in Mwanza. After ordination in June, 2008, he first represented the seminarians as a delegate to the General Chapter, from August to October, 2008. Following this he went to Sudan and worked in the Nuba Hills with Fr. Tom Tiscornia for two months. As Tiscornia was leaving there in 2009, the Regional Superior, Dave Smith, recommended that Hung move to Tanzania. Hung preferred a rural parish and he was assigned to Ndoleleji as of January, 2009.

There was a diocesan priest who was pastor in charge of the whole parish, although a Sister doing pastoral work was looked on as the Assistant Pastor. When Hung

arrived he was given responsibility for Mwamalasa, one of the four major Centres in Ndoleleji Parish. Hung said that each of the centres had about six to eleven outstations. In addition to the outstations of Mwamalasa, Hung also ministered to Magalata, a village that was one-half Sukuma and one-half Wataturu. “So, I had access to the Wataturu, although I did not want full-time work with them, because this is difficult work.”

As there had been only one priest serving the parish, the schedule was to celebrate Mass in a different Centre every Sunday. Hung followed this schedule, by saying Mass at Mwamalasa Centre on the third Sunday of the month, and in outstations of Mwamalasa on the other three Sundays. The pastor likewise followed a similar schedule. As mentioned previously, Mhunze was the largest Centre in the parish. It had a moderate sized, circular church, but in the 2010s a much larger rectangular church was being built. Mhunze was a small but growing town, on the main road between Shinyanga and Nyalikungu.

In weekdays Hung visited the outstations to Mwamalasa, in order to get to know the people.

I just wanted to get to know people first and see what they really need. I set up a schedule to visit in each outstation, find out how many families there are, and visit each family. I went with the catechist. We visited not only those coming to church but those who have been away from the church. I asked them why they didn't go to church, if they had a problem, and if there was anything we could do to help them.

I began by going out in the morning and going around visiting till evening, then staying overnight at the village. The next day I would continue visiting and then come back to rest for a day. In some places there were bedbugs and I couldn't sleep. I told the people I would sleep in my car, but with the Sukuma sense of hospitality so strong, they wouldn't let me sleep in my car. Thus, I decided to come back each evening to the mission. I did this for the first year and a half that I was in Ndoleleji.

After two years the people requested the pastor to hand over another Centre to Hung. Thus, Hung covered both Mwamalasa and Masanga, while the pastor continued on with Ndoleleji and Mhunze. Hung continued on with his routine of visiting families. Villages and the families were informed ahead of time when he was coming, so he was able to find people at home. Often the catechists or other church leaders would tell Hung that a particular family had a marriage problem or maybe members of the family had a spiritual problem, and they would discuss these matters during the visits. Because he generally wanted to visit ten or even more families in a given day, Hung let it be known that he didn't want anyone to give him breakfast and that he should be given only lunch.

Because of Sukuma hospitality Hung was often expected to receive a meal in the evening, resulting in a drive back to Ndoleleji in the dark. But he learned the roads and generally was able to get back even when it had rained. On one night he had to be towed by a passing Land Cruiser, only arriving back at the mission close to midnight.

In November, 2011, a second diocesan priest was assigned to Ndoleleji and the priests set up a new schedule. Beginning then, each of the four large Centres received Mass every Sunday, with one of the priests saying Mass in two places.

Given that catechists did the initial teaching in the catechumenate at the outstations and also presided over the Service Without a Priest on most Sundays, Hung inquired about their training and whether they had sufficient materials to perform their ministries. By 2010 many of the catechists in Ndoleleji Parish had not received training, either at Mipa or the program run at Ndoleleji in the 1970s. Hung first provided bibles and the Misale (a missal used by priests and catechists) to each of the catechists of the outstations of the two Centres that he was serving. Hung also helped three catechists to buy bicycles, with a one-third payment offer: the catechist himself would pay one-third of the price, the church one-third, and Hung one-third. Afterwards, the catechists would be responsible for upkeep of the bicycles, as they used them for family and personal needs. Hung set up a program of providing three bicycles per year for each of the two Centres, until every catechist had a bicycle.

Bicycles were needed primarily so that the catechists could come together each month for seminars on the Sunday readings, at which they looked at the themes of each gospel and how they would like to preach about them. Hung provided any exegetical content needed. At these monthly meetings they also discussed the catechumenate, going through a section of the material each month. The catechists had no books, only notebooks from previous years when they may have received input from the priest.

Many of the catechists had finished only primary school and few if any were good at reading. They also did not want to take notes but after Hung convinced them of the value of written notes almost all began doing this.

Hung was favorably impressed with the good character of the catechists, who were all married in church and had model families. Church marriage was not the norm in Sukuma land, due in part to the bridewealth system and also to the expectation that when one is married the couple will put on an expensive celebration – with a meal of rice and meat and plenty of soda and beer. The prohibitive cost of some ten or more cases of beer deterred many a prospective marriage.

Lack of a canonical marriage prevented many adult Catholic couples from receiving communion, a situation that Hung discovered in his home visits. He took pains to talk with the couples, attempting to find some solution by which they could marry without bankrupting the family. Hung discovered that many of the men had already completed bride price payment, so it was just a matter of talking with them, assuring them that an expensive celebration was not a part of Christian marriage.

Poor rainfall and loss of crops, perennial problems in much of Ndoleleji Parish, again led to lack of food in some of the less arable sections of the parish. Hung helped to buy food and with the cooperation of parish leaders in badly affected villages corn and sorghum were distributed to families, Catholic and non-Catholic. In the years 2010 and 2011 food relief was required and in 2012, when Hung was interviewed, the priests expected that food relief would again be needed. The programs were conducted mainly by the government, through sale of grain at low prices. Hung viewed church-run programs of food relief as counter productive to seeking long-term solutions to crop loss.

Hung also received requests to pay school fees. In secondary boarding schools in Tanzania the fees ranged from \$500 to even \$1,000 a year. The Tanzania Region had a scholarship fund, but it was sufficient to help only one student per year in a parish. With help from his family Hung was able to assist three students in the year 2012.

As of the early 2000s Tanzania had established day secondary schools in each Division of the country (each District has several Divisions). The day secondary school in Ndoleleji cost only about \$200 a year, but many families found it difficult to pay even this. The school had about 500 to 600 students in 2012, but only four teachers. Some of those who had finished the four years would be chosen to be teachers' aides, who were paid very little, if anything. Thus, the standard of education at these schools is very low, but it is better than nothing – and it also keeps young people in school for a longer time before they have to join the job market.

Hung commented that being an American priest serving under an African pastor gave him insights into the financial plight of diocesan priests in extremely poor rural parishes. All the money he collected within the parish, from his two Centres, was turned over to the diocesan priests. Despite this, local support was barely sufficient for one priest and far from enough for two.

As of 2016, when this history is being completed, Fr. Hung had become pastor of Ndoleleji. There were wholesale staffing changes in almost every parish in Shinyanga Diocese in 2015 and the previous pastor of Ndoleleji was transferred. Fortunately, Mhunze had become a parish, reducing the pastoral load at Ndoleleji.

In December, 2016, Hung completed eight years in the parish. He expected to be in the parish for the next few years. In all of Africa, Ndoleleji is one of only two parishes in which Maryknoll has had a continuous presence from the beginning to 2016 (Kowak being the other). In 2015 both Frs. Ohmann and Sybertz returned to retirement in the United States. Most likely, in a few years Hung will move somewhere else and this will bring to an end Maryknoll's presence in Ndoleleji.

#### MINISTRY TO THE WATATURU:

The appellation “Taturu” is actually the Sukuma name for a group of people called either the Datoga or Tatooga, an ethnic group made up of seven distinct sub-tribes, each of which has several clans within it. The total population of the Datoga is about 87,000. They live in semi-arid parts of the Rift Valley between Shinyanga Region, Singida Region and Arusha Region, and a few live in Mara Region. Their languages are related to the Mountain Nilotic languages of the Kalenjin peoples of Kenya and to the Maasai, although with significant differences because they have been separated from the Kenyan groups for many centuries.

The Mountain Nilotes migrated out of Sudan and western Ethiopia beginning about 3,000 years ago, and the Datoga reached north-central Tanzania by about 1,500 CE. Another group they are related to, the Iraqw, stayed in the eastern part of the Rift Valley in central Tanzania, where possibilities for farming are better. The Datoga migrated into the hotter, drier parts of the Rift Valley and became a semi-nomadic people, herding goats, sheep, donkeys, and primarily cattle. According to Jim Eble, the

particular group that migrated to the Lake Eyasi area did so due to a series of fights with the Maasai people in the Ngorongoro area.

Although other Mountain Nilotes engage in agriculture, the Datoga diet consists mainly of milk, meat, animal fat, and blood. All parts of their animals are utilized, such as horns, hides, tendons, and cattle dung, for either household or religious purposes. Some Datoga are today farming, raising crops such as beans, millet, sorghum and in a very few places corn.

The Datoga chose, for reasons known to them alone, to isolate themselves from other ethnic groups in Tanzania, to ignore the politics of the nation, including the national struggle for Independence and post-Independence calls for development and nation-building, to reject all forms of world religions, and to spurn modern education and health practices. Other Tanzanian ethnic groups consider them primitive. But the Datoga are a proud, fierce people skilled at traditional forms of warfare. (Naturally, a squadron of modern soldiers armed with automatic weapons could easily massacre a group of Datoga.) They live surrounded by other modern Bantu and Nilotic groups, and their relations often are conflictual. The Datoga have also been very slow to learn Swahili, the national language, further exacerbating their isolation.

The particular group we are referring to as the Wataturu live in the far eastern parts of Shinyanga Region stretching east to Lake Eyasi, to beyond the lake to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and south to Lake Kitangiri, which borders Singida Region. Their territory is ostensibly within both Ndoleleji and Bukundi Parishes, although only a handful of Wataturu are Catholics. They are extremely poor with regard to material and technological goods. They do not practice good hygiene, eat a diet limited to only a few foods, and have high rates of infant mortality. They have very few sources of water and often this water is not safe to drink. In Shinyanga Region, the Sukuma farmers are continuously moving closer to and within Wataturu territory, an inexorable push that squeezes the Wataturu into ever smaller and tighter places in which to graze their herds. At times Sukuma/Wataturu relations have spilled over into outright conflict. If fought with traditional weapons, the Wataturu win the battle, but it may be a matter of winning the battles but losing the war.

Is it hot, you ask? The area around Lake Eyasi has to be one of the hottest, driest places in eastern Africa.

Fr. Dan Ohmann had become very aware of the Wataturu in the outer reaches of Ndoleleji Parish because he and others used to go out to the Lake Eyasi area to hunt in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1984, while Ohmann was providing assistance to Imaleseko Centre, he went to say Mass at Bukundi, an outstation of Imaleseko. On that day, while returning to Ndoleleji, he witnessed a shocking event unfolding. About 3,000 armed Sukuma had travelled to Bukundi, with the intention to wage war against the Wataturu. Ohmann said that they travelled with their diviners, who cut up chickens to look at the innards and determine when it was most propitious to start fighting. But the diviners couldn't agree among themselves and the Sukuma warriors were getting increasingly apprehensive. The Wataturu had a reputation for being fearless, fierce, and skilled at warfare and it appeared that the Sukuma did not have fortune on their side. Furthermore, the Sukuma are farmers, not natural warriors.

Some 48 hours passed, from Sunday to Tuesday morning, and already many of the Sukuma were shaking with fear. Early that morning 700 Wataturu warriors circled around in back of the Sukuma and rushed out of the woods, shouting their war cries. The Sukuma all fled. According to government figures forty-one Sukuma were killed and not one Mtaturu was killed. Ohmann thought it was more than forty-one, maybe even one hundred killed. There were Catholics involved in the fighting, and two from Ndoleleji were among those killed.

Government authorities from Shinyanga Town were called out and the police arrested scores of Wataturu men. They also confiscated many of the Wataturu cattle. Once imprisoned the Wataturu men despaired, withered away and many of them died in prison. Eventually, those still alive were released and allowed to go back to their territory.

It should be noted that 1984 was the year of the terrible drought in Tanzania, and especially in Ndoleleji. It seems almost certain that the stressed drought conditions underlay the tensions leading to war. Proving this, 2006 was another very dry year and by then Ohmann had been living in proximity to the Wataturu for nine years. Some Taturu elders told Ohmann that tensions were again building up between the Sukuma and the Wataturu. Ohmann explained what transpired:

A Sukuma man planted crops on a plot of land at the edge of Taturu territory and Wataturu cattle grazed on the land, destroying the crops. A court case was brought to Shinyanga and the judge, who had conspired with the Sukuma man, fined seven Wataturu families TShs. 250,000/- each, equal to about \$165 each. One man couldn't pay and he was imprisoned.

I went in with four Wataturu elders to see the District Commissioner, a woman who had studied in one of the Maryknoll Sisters' high schools. She was not a Sukuma, but an Iraqw (who have some ethnic affiliation with the Taturu). She listened to the whole story. I told her about the previous war and that the same thing was going to happen again. One young Taturu man, a Catholic, knew Swahili and he told her in Kiswahili what was going on.

Within two days she came out with police and met with the village leader, who was a Sukuma, and then they went to meet with some of the Wataturu. After that they told the village leader to call a meeting ten days later and they would come out from Shinyanga.

When they came they told the people that the problem had to be settled, but not by the people (i.e. by fighting), but in Shinyanga. She said, "This is a regional problem; it's not a local problem."

This strengthened the good relations I have with the Wataturu.

Although there has been no further war, the underlying causes of potential conflict are increasing. Sukuma continue to move out towards the margins of Shinyanga Region looking for farm land, the Wataturu continue to get squeezed into tinier and harsher territory, and the global climatic conditions that contribute to more frequent and severe droughts persist unabatedly.

After the 1984 war (more of a skirmish, even though over 100 died), Ohmann began to get more interested in the conditions of the Wataturu, although it was not until 1993 that he was able to devote his full concentration on them. In that year, he and Don Sybertz went in to see Bishop Castor Sekwa, to explain that Sybertz wanted to retire as pastor of Mwanhuzi in order to concentrate on Sukuma cultural wisdom (cf below). This would enable Sybertz to take over Imaleseko, freeing Ohmann to go out to the Wataturu four days a week. The Bishop agreed to this. For a year Ohmann engaged in primary evangelization type of work in the Wataturu area, staying overnight in a Sukuma part of a village on the border between the two ethnic groups. In April, 1994, the Rwandan genocide took place and Ohmann heard on the BBC radio a plea by the refugees for priests. Ohmann responded to this request by the Bishop and went to the refugee camps for three years. (Cf below)

Prior to this, another Maryknoll priest, Fr. Jim Eble, had come to Tanzania after his ordination in 1988, with the express hope to be a missionary on the margins, “beyond the edges of the Church,” as he expressed it just before his ordination. He had done the final year of his OTP assignment in 1986/87 in Mugumu, where he had become familiar with the term ‘primary evangelization,’ and the priority that Maryknollers in that area purportedly were placing on this. He had also become somewhat familiar with the Wataturu and the stresses impacting their way of life, and concluded that this was the type of people that Maryknoll missionaries should be working with. The Wataturu had almost completely rejected any of the world religions, with only a handful of them Catholic. Thus, Eble also hoped to make them aware of the good news of the gospel.

After arrival at Ndoleleji Parish, which he used as his base residence, he began going out to the Wataturu.

The place was like the end of the world, really, but an interesting place that I call my Holy Land. It is in the Rift Valley system; there is Lake Kitangiri, which is a fresh-water lake, from which flows the Sibiti River into Lake Eyasi, which is a salt-water lake. I would go along the 100-kilometre (60 miles) section of the two lakes and river. I would go to three places; at two places I pitched my tent for sleeping but at the third place, at Lake Eyasi, I slept inside the boma (homestead), because there were lions around. The closest place was about 30 kilometres (20 miles) from Ndoleleji, but to the Lake Eyasi area it was closer to 60 miles.

The sources of water for Lake Kitangiri are rivers that flow from the area south and southwest of Shinyanga Town and from the hills around Singida Town, which is about 50 miles southeast of Lake Kitangiri. There are other seasonal rivers that flow southward from the territories encompassed by Ndoleleji, Gula, and Mwanhuzi Parishes into the Sibiti River. Most lakes in the Rift Valley are salt lakes, such as Lake Eyasi, as they have no outlet. Lake Kitangiri is an exception to this, as it has an outlet. With the inexorable processes of global warming and increased aridity in many parts of central Africa, one wonders if these lakes will have dried up by the end of this century.

Eble went on to say:

They were very welcoming to me. Dan Ohmann introduced me to three key people, from those three families where I used to stay. I started with a language informant, to learn the Kitaturu language. I recorded it on a digital recorder that I could listen to back at Ndoleleji. For the two years I was there I basically sat and listened; I didn't do much talking, except for greetings and other basic things.

I was eating their food and I lost a lot of weight. So, I had to come back to Ndoleleji every week, for my health and to study. After a year I decided I had to live out there and I made plans to build a house.

This decision to build a cement house unfortunately led to his mission to the Wataturu being aborted prematurely. Eble's intentions were to merely be a presence among the Wataturu, to share their lives as much as he was physically able (it is impossible for an American to live completely like the Wataturu, according to Eble), and to form a small community of those interested in Christianity, if any were open to this. In 1989 Ohmann was already talking about building schools for the Wataturu, but Eble was not interested in this.

However, Eble said that he was encountering resistance even to his low-key presence among the Wataturu. "They were suspicious of me because of colonial times and government interference in their lives. 'Have you come to take our land?' they would say to me." They also asked Eble what priests were, where his wives were, and who cooked for him. A middle-aged man without a wife was inconceivable to the Wataturu. "I was like the man from Mars," Eble commented.

Eble sought and thought he received permission from the representative of the Wataturu to build a house, just beyond the invisible line separating the Sukuma from the Wataturu. He brought out some Sukuma builders but almost immediately they were surrounded by a group of Wataturu young men armed with spears, bows and arrows. This went on for just a few days and then the Wataturu asked for a meeting. When Eble was asked who gave him permission to build, he pointed out the representative, who stated that he did not think Eble would actually build. The warriors then angrily ordered Eble and the Sukuma builders to permanently leave the area.

Eble was crestfallen and needed a couple of months to recover. He had also come down with a serious case of malaria and needed a complete rest. He then made inquiries as to who was the best person among the Wataturu to talk to, a man who was similar to a Chief in status. This man gave Eble permission to continue coming with his tent, but that the Wataturu did not want any building.

In the meantime, Eble had become very lonely as he had no Maryknollers with whom to socialize and seek good advice. Ohmann had come down with some medical problems in the U.S. and had to stay there for a year. When Ohmann returned to Ndoleleji Eble went to Dar es Salaam for vacation and to discern whether to stay with the Wataturu. After coming back to Ndoleleji he informed Ohmann that he was leaving, with the intention of moving to Issenye, where Eble's friend Fr. Don Larmore had recently been assigned.

In 1990 Eble moved to Issenye and stayed there for six years. (Cf the volume on Musoma Diocese.)

As was said above, in 1993 Dan Ohmann finally was free to work on a more full-time basis with the Wataturu, but he did not at that time make any attempt to build a semi-permanent house in their territory. For a year or slightly more he made weekly trips to the Wataturu, slowly getting to know a few individuals well, while also getting to know the people better in general. However, before he could make any greater commitment to this ministry, the huge refugee crisis occurred in western Tanzania, where hundreds of thousands of Hutu had fled from Rwanda. Ohmann worked in a refugee camp for three years. In December, 1997, he terminated his work in the camps and in early 1998 he returned to Ndoleleji and resumed his work with the Wataturu.

For the first month or so Ohmann went with a tent every weekend to Magalata Village, a place that he could reach even during the rainy season. A Taturu man who spoke Swahili gave permission to Ohmann to pitch his tent on a permanent basis in the village, on the Sukuma side of the village, but in an area devoid of any houses. This man also put up his tent there.

Ohmann said he chose this spot in the village, “where for one kilometre there were no houses; it was empty. Wataturu on one side and Wasukuma on the other side. It was because of that war (in 1984) and maybe I could do something.”

After one night, though, the Wataturu elders informed Ohmann, through the Mtaturu man, that Ohmann had not been given permission to live there. Ohmann pursued it, however, and requested a meeting with the elders the following week, which would be on a Wednesday under a tree. Ohmann showed up for the meeting, parking his vehicle at a respectable distance away. He was forced to wait all day, but in the end the man chairing the meeting told Ohmann that he could set up his tent there. He was told that the Wataturu elders were split but they agreed that Ohmann could live there. The chairman explained, “The Wazungu (White people) take our land and start projects. They try to start new ways, but we want to keep our customs and our way of life.”

Ohmann told him that he had no intention to start any project. He was sent by a Church merely to teach the Christian way of life. At this the Taturu man laughed and said, “If you think we are going to join your religion, you might as well go home right now. We are not going to change to any religion because we have our own religion.”

Ohmann asked for permission to stay for three years, after which he would approach the elders for an extension, if they approved. The Taturu man said there was no problem and he could stay for three years. During the first three years, 1998 to the beginning of 2001, Ohmann got to know many Wataturu and helped many of them. When he asked about extending his stay or if he should move elsewhere, the elders said that he could stay as long as wanted.

One of the types of assistance that Ohmann offered was to get places in secondary schools for Wataturu boys and girls who had finished primary school. Often their level of primary education was so sub-standard that they had to repeat two years of primary school material, a supplement to primary school added in recent years in Tanzania and called “Pre-Secondary,” after which most of Wataturu youngsters did very well in marks. Wataturu parents said they did not trust the government but would let Ohmann take their sons and daughters to Catholic schools, for which Ohmann paid the fees. St. Thomas Secondary School for boys, located in Tabora, is an excellent school and accepted a few

Taturu students. When the boys excelled in marks the school told Ohmann to bring more, in part because the school's reputation was enhanced by having Taturu students in the school. This scenario was repeated at the Girls Secondary School that Ohmann took Taturu girls to, although the standard of education of two girls was so low they could not continue in secondary school. Instead they were allowed to live at a White Fathers' mission and learn domestic science subjects.

The incident in 2006 when Ohmann intervened on behalf of the Taturu man imprisoned in Shinyanga Town went a long way to solidify his acceptance by the Wataturu people, as one who truly cared for them.

Ohmann told one fascinating story about an incident in the middle of the night, not long after he started living in his tent. A man came and asked Ohmann to take him and his son to the doctor, as the son had broken his collarbone while wrestling. Ohmann said the hospital was too far away and to come back the following morning. But the man said that the doctor was just across a shallow stream not too far away. Ohmann was intrigued with this and agreed to go.

It turned out that the "doctor" was an elderly Taturu man who had learned over many years how to reset dislocated shoulders and broken bones, in humans and in animals. Young men were always hurting themselves with practice wrestling and cattle got broken legs stepping in a hole or something.

Ohmann described in detail the procedure used by the healer, with no sedative and merely using cloth and a large rock to pull the collarbone back into place and set it. The crunching sound of maneuvering the shoulder into place could make one cringe, but the young man stoically endured the whole procedure without a whimper. After twenty minutes his collarbone and shoulder were reset – and Ohmann was astonished at what he had just witnessed.

Over the years many Wataturu came to Ohmann's place and related their problems. Ohmann helped if he could. Ohmann communicated in Swahili, but learned some Taturu words over the years. Gradually, as the new century unfolded even the Wataturu were learning Swahili. Ohmann said, "As I got to know them I found that despite their fearsome reputation they are very nice, certainly very nice to me."

In the 2000s Ohmann was able to build a small mud house where he could sleep and prepare food, and another little building used for prayer and Mass, on a small compound surrounded by a simple fence made of reeds. The compound had enough room for him to park his four-wheel drive pickup truck. A few Wataturu would come in to pray, read the scriptures, and share reflections on the scriptures' current significance, similar to a small Christian Community meeting. Mass was also celebrated in this little chapel. The man who helped him get the plot in 1997 eventually became a Catholic. But as of 2012 Ohmann had been able to baptize only four Wataturu families.

Ohmann's practice was to go out on Thursday every week and stay until Sunday afternoon. There were four places he travelled to, three others in addition to Magalata Village. One of the places was a long distance from Ndoleleji, in the southern part of Taturu territory. In 2005 Ohmann formally retired and joined Maryknoll's Retirement Community but continued to live at Ndoleleji and go out to the Wataturu.

In 2010 a Taturu man told Ohmann that at an elders' meeting the Wataturu discussed Christianity. One said that they should look into the Christian religion, "because if it's any good we'll all join it, and if it's not we'll stay like we are." However, even at the end of 2015 when health problems forced Ohmann to return permanently to the United States, there had been no evidence of heightened interest by Wataturu to become Christian.

Ohmann cited the example of one man, named Ligadi, with whom he had a discussion about the purpose of life. Ligadi said the purpose is to have children. He did not give a number, but indicated that it could be ten or even fifty. He said, "God knows, but the more you have the more you are accomplishing."

Ohmann said to him, "What about me? I don't have any children."

Ligadi responded, "Padre, you're making a big mistake."

In spite of the continued hold that traditional beliefs had on the Wataturu, there was a general increase in parents wanting their children to get an education. Ohmann said that "quite a few parents are seeing that they can't go on as in the past. During one vacation I had a month's class for Wataturu kids. Some were in school, others not. One boy in fifth grade, who could read in Swahili, I taught how to read in Kitatuga. The prayers and the gospels of Mark and Matthew have been translated into Kitatuga. One day his father and several other old men came and the boy read to them in Kitatuga. The father immediately said to me that I could take his boy and do whatever I wanted with him. People from other villages are also asking me to take their children to school. But secondary school is so expensive that I can take only a few each year." Ohmann added that this incident, hearing a boy read in their own language, broke the ice for other parents, many of whom began recognizing the value of education. [When Ohmann was interviewed in 2012, he preferred calling the language Kitatuga rather than Kitaturu.]

Cost, however, was a major hurdle to expanding the number of Wataturu students in secondary school. St. Thomas High School cost \$1,000.00 per year per student in 2012 and other good quality boarding schools cost over \$500.00 per year. Ohmann could assist a few students each year but not to the extent of the requests he was getting from Wataturu parents. The Wataturu themselves are not able to pay the fees.

It should be pointed out, however, that if a family sold three or four cows a year they could pay fees for one student. Given the importance of cattle to the Taturu worldview it is unlikely that the Wataturu are at the stage of valuing education over cattle.

An image juxtaposing Wataturu cattle and a secondary school would be the most apt metaphor illustrating the existential dilemma facing the Wataturu in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: either opt for modern education and other aspects of modernity or disappear as a people. Opting for modernity, however, means eviscerating their traditional worldview.

Speaking in 2012 Ohmann said that there were already symptoms of severe cultural dislocation in some behaviors of Wataturu people, such as increased use of alcohol, more incidents of cattle theft, use of banghi (similar to marijuana), and squandering money on women in commercial centers. Ohmann saw similarities between Taturu dysfunctional behaviors and those of Native Americans in the United States.

An abiding sense of fear of cosmic evil forces before which Wataturu felt powerless was another cultural manifestation that Ohmann thought needed to be remedied. He gave the example of epilepsy, which the Wataturu perceived as being

caused by evil spirits. He said that not one Taturu person had gone to a hospital for treatment of epilepsy, although he himself was treating 27 people. Instead they would go to the diviner, because they believed the disease was caused by a curse. "In some way you can say fear is at the heart of the problem. Our reflection groups on the gospels, especially the Gospel of Mark, have helped some Wataturu overcome their fears."

Fear of death and of the souls of dead people that may be walking around at night are two other examples of Taturu dread. When Ohmann broached the subject of death, typically Wataturu did not want to speak about it. Gilamuni, a Taturu man who attended the small Christian community for a year studying the Christian faith and eventually was baptized, explained, "Our whole life is based on fear. We're afraid of death, of spirits, of the power they have over us."

Wataturu men wear amulets and ringlets made of goat leather as charms to ward off the power of evil spirits. Children are also forced to wear various objects as charms to protect them. Ohmann told of one woman who was afraid to live in her house until Ohmann blessed it with holy water. These fears are so embedded in Wataturu beliefs that Ohmann found it difficult to determine if he could baptize adults, even after they had been a part of the Christian community for years. At the same time, he judged certain objects as merely memorial symbols, not dissimilar from his mother's wedding ring embossed on his chalice.

As for converting Wataturu to be Catholics, Ohmann recognized that this was a long-term endeavor, dependent on personal relationships. He cited the example of one Taturu man who decided to become Catholic because while he was working for a Catholic man from another ethnic group he was attracted with the way the Catholic family came together to pray every night, went to church to pray on Sundays, and treated other people with respect, gentleness and charity. The Taturu man undertook the one-year catechumenate, was baptized and when he returned to Taturu territory he became a member of Ohmann's small community. This man and Gilamuni acted as catechists, forming small communities of people who wanted to pray and hear the gospel stories, even if none chose to seek baptism. Additionally, a woman, named Mariamu Majita, and her daughter Susanna were Catholics and they also acted as catechists, teaching small groups of people about Christianity.

The future looks bleak, however. In addition to the difficulties of harsh terrain compounded by incessant climate change, another factor impacting the Wataturu is the dominance of the modern paradigm adopted by the East African nations after Independence, namely that of settled agriculture. Although these nations rejected rule by colonial powers they willingly appropriated the colonial models of development. As agricultural extension officers are all from settled farming areas that use modern farming methods, they neither understand nor value nomadic types of life. Nomads were encouraged to discontinue migrating with their herds in favor of settling in localities where water and forage were accessible, for smaller but more productive herds, with the goal to be integrated into the modern economy. No option was offered for nomadic pastoralism. As a result nomads have been ignored and marginalized. With regard to the Wataturu, Ohmann stated, "The farmers always take over the land. The herders always end up having to move on but there's no place to go anymore."

In response to direct questions about the future of the Wataturu, both Ohmann and Eble responded that it will be extremely difficult for the Wataturu to survive the twenty-first century.

Increasing physical problems made it impossible for Ohmann to continue living in such a remote place and at the end of 2015, at the age of 88, he returned permanently to the United States. There is no one now, at least in Shinyanga Diocese, working directly with the Wataturu, although the Catholics receive Mass on a scheduled basis.

### SUKUMA ORAL LITERATURE:

Fr. Don Sybertz was ordained in 1955 and came to Tanzania as part of the big group assigned to Shinyanga Diocese that year, a diocese to which he remained assigned until health issues forced him to return to the United States in 2015. After working in several parishes he was assigned to Kilulu in 1958, where he took over from Fr. Charles Callahan as pastor and stayed until 1968. In 1968 he began his presence in eastern Shinyanga, first as pastor in Gula, then in Mwanhuzi, and finally living in Ndoleleji while continuing to serve Mwanhuzi as pastor. In 1993, Associate Maryknoll Father John Zeitler was willing to take over as pastor of Mwanhuzi and Sybertz formally retired, while continuing to live at Ndoleleji with his classmate Dan Ohmann.

Since the 1950s Sybertz had an interest in Sukuma proverbs and had made it his practice to carry around a notebook in which to write any new proverb he heard. He explained his interest in proverbs:

Ever since I was a kid I was interested in sayings, even in English. Right from my first assignment in Busanda (1955) I started writing down all these sayings and proverbs, and relating them to the scriptures. George Cotter was also interested. Once when I was on furlough I met with him at his apartment in New York and we contacted Roland Murphy, the Scripture scholar, about how to relate Sukuma proverbs to scripture. Not only proverbs but also stories. I am interested in them not for themselves but as a method for teaching the Good News.

Please refer above on pages 9 to 10 about work Sybertz did on codifying proverbs and stories in Gula and Mwanhuzi Parishes in the 1970s and 1980s. As of the year 1990 he had already published two books, one on Sukuma Proverbs and the other on Sukuma Stories. Beginning in 1993, Sybertz was able to devote full time to research on all forms of Sukuma oral literature, get it systematically organized, and publish books or other publications that could be used in Sukuma churches. He explained his rationale as follows:

I chose to do this research because I figured this was a way to give the people a deeper level of their faith. I have always been interested in their culture, their songs, proverbs and things like that. If I could do it all over again I would have started with their traditional religion and go from there into scripture and theology.

There are many similarities between their culture and scripture. It is very difficult to find a Sukuma proverb that is not related in some way to scripture.

Sybertz had been living with Dan Ohmann since 1983 in a house at the edge of Ndoleleji Mission, while each carried out pastoral services in Mwanhuji Parish and its outstations. Their house also became a sort of refuge for them away from the demands of parochial administrative work, and their community living was seen as a source of mutual support and spiritual enrichment. When both retired fully in 1993, Sybertz continued to serve Imaleseko Centre and Ohmann was freed to start a full-time outreach to the Wataturu people. Their community life was shared with other Maryknoll priests assigned to Ndoleleji, particularly since 2009, when Fr. Hung Dinh was assigned to Ndoleleji Parish, Fr. Ed Schoellmann to Bukundi Parish, and Fr. John Lange to Mwanhuji Parish.

In 2010 the pastor at Mwanhuji was Fr. Dominic Makalanga, who appreciated the help that Sybertz was still giving to Imaleseko Centre. Around that time, the chairman at Imaleseko requested Sybertz to help the people of the Centre to build a new and larger church, which Sybertz agreed to. He drew a design and presented it to Fr. Makalanga, who then re-designed it in the cruciform style that Ed Schoellmann was using in the new church at Bukundi (cf ahead). Sybertz agreed to this and construction began. Sybertz had a condition that the people contribute much of the money and provide a lot of unskilled labor, and he would buy construction material and pay the skilled labor salaries. As of 2012 the construction was nearing completion.

When Sybertz began doing the research full-time in 1993 he had already accumulated reams of material containing proverbs and stories, but he readily admitted that he was not well organized. One aspect of his work was to put the proverbs in alphabetical order. Later, when computers came to the missions of Shinyanga Diocese, the lists of proverbs in alphabetical order could be typed into the computer and then filed in folders. A Sukuma priest, Fr. Martin Mhango, who was stationed at Nyalikungu Parish in 2012, was doing the computer work.

Sybertz took over another small building on the Ndoleleji compound, not far from their residence, which he could use as an office and a place to store all the documents and books he had compiled. Several people came in most days to help him with the work of organizing all the material. In all Sybertz had a group of about thirty to thirty-five people who worked with him gathering traditional material, organizing it in the office, and going out to present Sukuma stories as short dramas in villages.

Sybertz narrated how they would do this, using as an example a mythical Sukuma story of a boy who conquers a monster. He would go with several members of his group to a village, which would have been informed ahead of time that they were coming. Not only Catholics would attend but as the play unfolded most residents of the village would come to watch. Many villagers would be drafted to perform parts of the play, which would include not only the speaking and acting parts but also Sukuma songs that related to specific themes of the drama.

The particular play that Sybertz talked about is called in Sukuma “*Massara Kulangwa*,” or by its English name “The Clever Young Man and the Monster.” Essentially it is about one brother with a bad eye, who actually sees more clearly than his older brothers, whom he tries to save from seven women they have married, who are actually witches. The brothers are killed but the one-eyed brother escapes in a flying log. A witch follows him but he hides and later burns down the house where she is residing.

The witch isn't killed, however, but morphs into a monster that appears successively in the forms of vegetables or animals. Eventually the monster kills all the people in the village except for one woman who hides in the long grass. She gives birth to a son, named Massara Kulangwa, who grows up and kills the monster. As a result he is named the king.

Sybertz said that throughout the presentation he and his group ask questions of those in attendance about what the myth is symbolizing. For instance, the monster is to be understood as Death. The myth has many more elements than those briefly cited in the previous paragraph, enabling them to look at many themes, such as wisdom, courage, and the theological theme of resurrection. Another symbol that needs explanation is that of the flying log that the one-eyed man used to escape from the witches; this is explained as a symbol of the Church. Since many of the symbols are also Christian and biblical symbols, there were readings from related scriptural passages during the presentations.

There were few if any kinds of entertainment in rural Sukumaland, thus people appreciated visits by Sybertz and his group. But in addition to entertaining and instructing people in the villages, Sybertz also sought more traditional Sukuma wisdom. "Every time we went out we would ask the people to bring in stories, songs, proverbs or whatever. So, we have a lot of information."

There was a lot more literacy in Sukumaland by the year 2012 so much of what was brought in by the people was written down, in either Kisukuma or Kiswahili. A few relayed the proverbs or stories orally, which the team wrote down. Sybertz said in 2012 that his group had "hundreds of stories and thousands of proverbs." Furthermore, the songs, many of which were new, original Sukuma songs, were "very good for teaching theology."

Although Mass would not be celebrated during Sybertz' visits to the villages to present plays, in part because the whole village would be welcomed to attend, in response to a question he stated that short presentations of plays with evident theological or scriptural reference could be beneficially used in Mass, in lieu of a typical sermon. Sermons tend to be overly rational, whereas for people of an oral culture literary or artistic presentations make for a more effective pedagogy.

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s Sybertz continued to make forays to the Sukuma Cultural Museum in Bujora, near Mwanza, which White Father David Clement had started in the 1970s. While there Sybertz liked to sit with the older men eliciting from them more insight on the proverbs.

While Sybertz was being interviewed at Ndoleleji in 2012 there were two men in his office, Albert Kija and Joseph Mandago, researching scriptural references to the Sukuma proverbs. They used a biblical concordance that had been published in Kiswahili some years previously. Sybertz said that as much as they appreciated learning about this material, they also enjoyed doing the work. These men have also become an excellent, long-term resource for Shinyanga Diocese for teaching biblical knowledge.

One thing that remained undone in 2012 was the recording of Sukuma songs, many of them composed decades previously and which only a few people knew from memory. If these older people died, those songs could be lost forever. Sybertz said that many of the Catholic songs composed more recently contained very good theology, but that even many of these had not been recorded.

The New Testament had been translated into Kisukuma and there were a few other things being published in the Sukuma language. Sybertz did not see any conflict between using Kisukuma with people in the rural areas, even though Swahili was the national language. He said that even the Bishop spoke in Kisukuma at times during church services. Sybertz said:

It's clearer if you explain something in Sukuma. If I use a Sukuma proverb, or a Sukuma story, it makes a big difference. It's easier to understand. Some of the people aren't that good in Swahili. But it's better to use Swahili in official events.

As of 2012 Sybertz had published two books of Sukuma Proverbs, which he considered very helpful. He had also published a book of Sukuma Stories. He added that he had enough material to publish many more books.

Sybertz stated that the overall purpose of his work was the promotion of Holiness. What he most liked to do was sit with small groups of people and help draw out from them in discussion what holiness means and how we can live our lives in a holier way. Fundamentally, this is what Christianity is all about. He said:

We shouldn't be preaching. We should draw our people out; that's a good way to teach. We go out in these groups and we ask them questions and we discuss. Then we have a meal. It's kind of a fun time; it's not like going to church.

Sybertz thought that more utilization of small group discussions in the United States could be very effective as a means of adult Christian education, although he did not know how this would be achieved.

By 2015 Sybertz' eyesight had deteriorated appreciably, due to the progressive eye disease of Macula Degeneration, and he had no alternative but to return to the United States, where he took up residence in the St. Teresa Nursing Home at Maryknoll, NY. Despite this he continued to be in communication with the people publishing books and other materials of Sukuma oral literature and he helped pay for the publication of at least one more book.

The published books contain the proverbs and stories in three languages: Kisukuma, Kiswahili and English. Thus, they will continue to be a valuable resource for the catechetical efforts in Shinyanga Diocese and can even be used in other dioceses.

#### REFUGEE CAMPS FOR RWANDESE REFUGEES:

On April 6, 1994, the plane carrying the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, Juvenal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntariyamira respectively, was shot by a missile while coming in to land at Kigali Airport and crashed, killing all on board. This act led to the immediate abrogation of the peace accords signed in August, 1993, in Arusha, Tanzania, between the Hutu-led government of Rwanda and the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), made up of Tutsi troops and led by Paul Kagame. There were RPF troops in Kigali but their stronghold was in northeastern Rwanda near the border with Uganda, where there were also many Tutsi exiles from previous massacres.

[This report on the Rwandan Genocide is from the Wikipedia article, which is highly recommended. It is objective, detailed, comprehensive and not overly long. To access it, google Rwandan Genocide.]

There had been a civil war between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda since 1990, which had included skillful attacks by the RPF in 1991 and several violent attacks by Hutu extremists perpetrated against Tutsi in early 1993. The Arusha Accords called for a power sharing government, placement of RPF troops at the Parliament building in Kigali, and the presence of a United Nations peacekeeping force, called UNAMIR. However, hard-line Hutu elites, who ascribed to an unrelenting ideology known as ‘Hutu Power,’ rejected power sharing. They began arming Hutu civilians throughout the country in 1993 and 1994 with machetes, hand grenades and other types of small armaments.

It has not been definitively proven who shot the missile, but a French investigation in 2012 concluded that the missile could not possibly have been fired from the military base occupied by the RPF forces of Paul Kagame. In fact, in 1993 and 1994 President Habyarimana had been trying to remove hard line Hutus from his government, raising their ire against him. Beginning in March, 1993, the Hutu Power compiled a list of ‘traitors,’ which may have included Habyarimana’s name. They began talking about a ‘final solution,’ i.e. the extermination of Tutsi in Rwanda, a determination solidified in October, 1993, when Melchior Ndadaye, the newly-elected, first-ever Hutu President of Burundi was assassinated by extremist Tutsi army officers. The Hutu Power began making serious plans to unleash the genocide and waited for an appropriate pretext to do so. This came with the killing of Habyarimana.

That night a crisis committee met, led by Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, which removed the Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and had her killed. Bagosora personally phoned civilian authorities all over the country, ordering them to begin exacting revenge by killing all Tutsis. The ten Belgian soldiers who tried to protect the Prime Minister and her husband were also killed. The killing of all Tutsi, “including babies,” began immediately and spread to six Provinces on April 7<sup>th</sup> and to two other Provinces within a week. Furthermore, as of noon on April 7, according to General Romeo Dallaire, the commander of UNAMIR, “all the moderate political leadership was dead or in hiding, the potential for a future moderate government utterly lost.”

The genocide happened fast. In six weeks it is estimated that 800,000 had been killed. The only areas spared were RPF controlled areas of northeastern Rwanda and the most southwestern Provinces, where there were fewer Tutsi, some of whom were able to escape to Zaire. French troops arrived in June, 1994, to set up a safe zone in southwestern Rwanda, called Operation Turquoise, although they saved very few lives in fact. Other western powers did not act to stop the genocide and UNAMIR had no mandate to intervene, except to protect several thousand Tutsi who had fled into its military base. The genocide effectively petered out because almost all Tutsi had been killed so quickly.

Almost all the killing was carried out by Hutu civilians using simple weapons such as machetes. They knew who their Tutsi neighbors were and in other places, such as roadblocks, Tutsi were identified by their national ID cards, which had to state a person’s ethnicity. Once identified as Tutsi a man was immediately hacked to death, although many women were captured to serve as sex slaves and repeatedly raped, including by men who had been diagnosed as HIV positive, resulting in many female survivors of the genocide coming down with AIDS.

The Wikipedia article is worth quoting here:

Gerard Prunier (author of “The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide,” published by C. Hurst and Co., London, in 1998) ascribes this mass complicity of the population to a combination of: 1) the democratic majority ideology, in which Hutu had been taught to regard Tutsi as dangerous enemies; 2) the culture of unbending obedience to authority; and 3) the duress factor – villagers who refused to carry out orders to kill were often branded as Tutsi sympathizers and killed themselves.

The population of Rwanda in 1994 was estimated to be 7.3 million, packed into a small, densely populated country – density of population viewed as one of the underlying causes of the genocide. Rwanda is a landlocked country, dependent on imports travelling a very long distance from the port of Mombasa, exacerbating its vulnerability. Coffee was its main export crop, constituting about 90% of export revenues. Failure of a coffee agreement several years prior to 1994 had caused the international coffee price to drop precipitously, possibly another major fissure in Rwanda’s social fabric.

Despite the structural pressures on Rwandan society, all blame was heaped on ethnicity.

Hutu made up 84% of the population, Tutsi 15%, and Twa 1%. All three groups speak the same language, Kinyarwanda, and only the Twa, descended from pygmy hunter-gatherers who settled in Rwanda over 5,000 years ago, have any clear genetic difference from the Hutu and Tutsi. There is no genetic difference between Hutu and Tutsi, and both groups are descended from Bantu farmers who migrated to Rwanda between 700 BCE and 1500 CE. Tutsi are those who made their livelihood as cattle herders, whereas Hutu practiced subsistence farming. Some Tutsi are tall and thin, with facial features that somewhat resemble the Cushitic peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia, which created the stereotypical description of Tutsi. In fact, it is almost impossible to distinguish between most Tutsi and Hutu without noting their national identity cards.

The colonial powers, first German and then Belgium after World War I, had favored the Tutsi, and the word Tutsi came to mean those of higher status. Belgium chose to rule Rwanda through Tutsi Chiefs – a form of ‘Indirect Rule,’ a term coined by the British – and despite colonial efforts at comprehensive education, health, public works and agricultural development, Tutsi dominance became increasingly entrenched. In 1935 the Belgian authorities mandated that the national identity card must list a person’s ethnicity – even though by the 20<sup>th</sup> century the divisions between Hutu and Tutsi were not fundamentally ethnic but due to socio-economic class. This colonial decision prevented educated, wealthy Hutu from attaining ‘Tutsi status,’ and ushered in ethnic animosities, which lingered on up to the 1990s. From 1960 on there were frequent outbreaks of interethnic violence, reprisals, and hordes of refugees. From 1990 to 1993 there was full-scale civil war in Rwanda, which the peace accords of 1993 hoped to settle once and for all.

The genocide lasted until July 4, 1994, when RPF troops took control of Kigali, and finally ended on July 18<sup>th</sup> that year, 100 days after it began. In that 100 days between 800,000 and one million people were killed, mainly Tutsi but at least 10% were Hutu. The government of Rwanda today claims that the total killed were 1,174,000 – in other

words, over 10,000 each day. In just over three months Rwanda lost 40% of its population: one million killed and two million who fled as refugees. July 4<sup>th</sup> is now celebrated in Rwanda as its Independence Day, a date chosen not merely as the day when the RPF entered Kigali but also due to United States support for the RPF and Paul Kagame.

On April 7, 1994, Paul Kagame told both the Hutu Crisis Committee and UNAMIR that RPF forces would resume fighting unless the killing of Tutsi stopped. The RPF military was expanded with Tutsi who had survived the genocide and exiles from neighboring countries. They made rapid progress southwards from northeastern and north-central Rwanda, encircling Kigali within a few weeks and cutting off supplies to the capital. The Rwandan Army retreated further west and southwest, losing morale in the process. By June the RPF was clearly winning the war and in July the final victory was achieved. As Hutu recognized that their forces were losing the war, hundreds of thousands fled to neighboring countries.

On the day after Easter, Monday, April 18, 1994, Fr. Dan Ohmann was at Ndoleleji Parish listening to the BBC radio, which broadcast that 250,000 Hutu refugees had crossed the bridge over the Kagera River at Rusumo Falls in one day (and a total of 500,000 in the space of just a few days), into Tanzania just northeast of Ngara, Tanzania.

Ohmann heard the BBC reporter ask the refugees what the world community could do for them and one of the refugees responded, "Could you get us some priests."

At first Ohmann couldn't understand why refugees would be asking for priests, when it seemed that their most urgent needs were for basic necessities, such as food and shelter. But that same week Bishop Christopher Mwoleka of Rulenge Diocese, the diocese in which all the refugees had entered, put out a call to all dioceses and religious orders in Tanzania for volunteers to come to Rulenge to help the refugees, because 85% of them were Catholic and Rulenge Diocese could not possibly serve them. Mwoleka requested ninety pastoral workers. Ohmann had just retired, had not yet started his full-time outreach to the Wataturu, and was available. After thinking it over for a week or two he decided that it would be preferable for him to postpone his work with the Wataturu and volunteer to work in one of the refugee camps, which were located on the outskirts of Ngara Town. He originally expected to be at Ngara for only three months.

The Tanzania Region had an Assembly at the end of May, at which volunteering in the refugee camps was put on the agenda. Ohmann said that six to eight Maryknollers volunteered to go for three months. Fr. Joe Healey, who had previously worked in Rulenge Diocese and was a personal friend of Bishop Mwoleka, travelled to Rulenge and Ngara to do an official investigation of how Maryknoll could help. In mid-1994 two SMA priests from Shinyanga Diocese went to work in the refugee camps in Ngara and the Maryknoll Region decided to collaborate with the SMAs. However, from May to November no further regional action occurred to implement this offer. So, Ohmann decided that he would go to Rulenge at the beginning of January, 1995.

Due to a miscommunication Bishop Mwoleka had not received any letter from the Maryknoll Regional Superior. Thus, when Ohmann showed up to talk with him the Bishop did not know what he was there for. However, he immediately accepted Ohmann's offer, as there was only one other priest volunteer, an SMA priest, who was going to finish his service in six weeks. Mwoleka advised Ohmann what to do next and

gave him a letter of introduction to the United Nations, which was running the camps. Unfortunately, UN bureaucracy was difficult to navigate, and Ohmann was getting frustrated in obtaining official permission to work in the camps. Eventually, Ohmann contacted the head of the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), a Belgian priest, who sent a Tanzanian Jesuit priest to the Vice-President's office in Dar es Salaam with a list of Catholic volunteers that JRS wanted to be approved. Three weeks later the approved list was brought back to Ngara, with Ohmann's name on it.

Ohmann was assigned to a camp called Lukole, which in 1995 had 25,000 people but had grown to 118,000 by the time Ohmann left at the end of 1997. Ohmann originally intended to volunteer for only three months but agreed to stay for three years because other Maryknollers wanted someone at the camps with experience, who could introduce them to the complexities of working with refugees. In January, 1995, the Maryknoll Tanzania Region had another Assembly, at which they confirmed the names of others who would join Ohmann in Ngara.

One of the supreme ironies of the Rwandan Genocide was that over 80% of the population was Catholic, both Hutu and Tutsi. Catholics killed Catholics and Catholic churches in some cases had become places not of sanctuary but traps into which Tutsi were lured in order to make massacring them easier. Ohmann discussed his thinking regarding how he should begin to work in the camp.

At the same time as the genocide the First Africa Synod took place in Rome. It came out with the resolution: the African Church in the future is going to be built on Small Christian Communities. Before going to Ngara I had attended a seminar at the Maryknoll Language School on the Synod and the priority of SCCs was the main thing discussed. So, when I went to the camp we decided right away that forming SCCs would be our focus.

We were having Sunday Mass during all this time and I was going around visiting. But we decided to start with the catechists. We asked all the catechists to start SCCs in their streets and by the end of my three years we had over 100 SCCs, all over the camp. My practice was to visit two SCCs each day, one in the morning and one in late afternoon. Each one lasted for an hour and a half. I used materials from Lumko Institute (located in South Africa), the materials on the rosary which had modern pictures based on each mystery. First I gave the picture and the gospel reading to the catechist ahead of time and asked him to prepare to discuss it. When I came we said the rosary, read the gospel of one of the mysteries, examined the picture and discussed the meaning of that mystery for us today. We did not celebrate Mass at the SCC meetings. That was almost the entirety of my work in the three years I was there.

Lukole Camp had actually been started earlier, in 1993, for Hutu refugees from Burundi and was then expanded in 1994 to accommodate Hutu refugees from Rwanda. Three other camps were started solely for Rwandans, called Benako, Ushuhura Hills, and Lumase. Benako became notorious for its large number of Hutu thugs who spent their time in the camp planning on how to attack the Tutsi in Rwanda.

The camp in which Ohmann worked had only Hutu people. Any Tutsi discovered in the camp would be in extreme danger of being immediately killed. Furthermore, those

involved in Hutu-Tutsi mixed marriages had to live in another camp, due to the same risk of being killed. But within a period of months they were all repatriated back to Rwanda.

Hutu leaders of the genocide also escaped to the camps, both in Tanzania and Zaire (renamed Democratic Republic of Congo in 1997, when Mobutu Sese Seko was overthrown), and they continued to exert de facto control over all the Hutu in the camps. The camps, especially in Zaire, became breeding grounds for Hutu guerrillas to stage attacks on Rwanda and on any Tutsi still living in Congo in later years.

Ohmann was not sure if there had been SCCs in Rwanda prior to the genocide, but it would have been impossible for Hutu and Tutsi to attend the same community. In the refugee camps it was even more impossible. Ohmann met individual Tutsis who had lost family members in Tanzania, presumably killed by Hutu.

Ohmann said that in October, 1997, one of the last things he did was have a seminar on how to set up and organize an SCC meeting. Ohmann told the people that there's a new Church being built in Africa and that when they went back to Rwanda they should invite Tutsi to join their SCCs.

Ohmann said that an older man who had attended all the SCC meetings and any seminars that Ohmann offered was getting perturbed at this talk of mixing together. He told Ohmann, "Father, it will never work, to invite the Tutsi back with us."

Ohmann responded with two examples. The first was the Our Father: Ohmann said we all say this prayer, implying that we all have only one Father. If we reject our common humanity we can not receive communion, the sacrament by which we all become one. His second example was of his living with an African diocesan priest from Shinyanga Diocese who had come to assist Ohmann in the refugee work. Ohmann said that if an American and a Tanzanian can live together, then Hutu and Tutsi, who speak the same language and are basically the same people, should be able to live together.

In addition to work with Small Christian Communities, Ohmann helped to establish a vocation club that led to the ordination of five priests. Three of them stayed in Rulenge Diocese and two others returned to Rwanda. Several years after he had left Ngara Ohmann went back there for one of the ordinations. In the camp they also started a choir, which grew to 300 boys and girls. The choir leader, whom Ohmann characterized as a dedicated and very smart young man, later also joined the seminary and was ordained a priest for Rulenge Diocese.

In December, 1997, Ohmann finished his three year assignment to Lukole Camp and returned to Ndoleleji Parish, where he embarked on his new ministry to the Wataturu people.

In addition to Ohmann other Maryknollers volunteered to work in the refugee camps. The first to come was Fr. Jim Roy in late 1995. Others were Frs. Lou Quinn, John Eybel, Associate Maryknoll priest Steve Brown and Dave Schwinghamer, and two Lay Missioners, one of whom was Janet Hackert. Maryknoll Sister Li Ching Chen worked in one of the camps to the north of Lukole. Fr. Tom McDonnell, who was working in the Amani Counseling Centre in Nairobi, went to Rwanda to do trauma counseling work. Of these, the only one who was interviewed about his work in the camps was Schwinghamer.

Schwinghamer said that he was in South Africa during that fateful month of April, 1994, at another momentous event in African history, the election of Nelson Mandela,

which took place simultaneously with the genocide and the Africa Synod in Rome. In the first week after the genocide began, it wasn't clear what was happening in Rwanda. Schwinghamer added that no one in Tanzania had any inkling that a genocide was being planned in a country neighboring Tanzania, where he was working at the time. "This has been a lesson to all of us," he observed.

In 1995 Schwinghamer made two visits to western Tanzania, where the camps were, one as chairman of the Religious Superiors of Tanzania Justice and Peace Committee, and another trip on behalf of Maryknoll, to see how Ohmann was faring. When he learned that Ohmann wanted to take a one-month vacation he asked the Justice and Peace Committee if he could go for this month, to fill in for Ohmann. This was approved. Schwinghamer said:

I spent a month filling in for Dan Ohmann, which got me into pastoral work with refugees. That in turn got me interested in going there for a longer period after I finished with the Religious Superiors Association.

During his five years with the Religious Superiors group Schwinghamer had gone to South Africa and witnessed the reconciliation efforts going on there, and he was also familiar with the work in reconciliation going on with the group started by Fr. Carroll Houle in Nairobi, the group known as People for Peace. Schwinghamer recommended that Maryknoll assist young Africans to be trained in disciplines such as conflict resolution, negotiation, peace work and reconciliation. He investigated places to get this training and the Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia was chosen. A young man from Kenya, Joseph Babu, a member of People for Peace, was sent to EMU for a two-year Masters Degree program and Schwinghamer enrolled there for a one-year certificate course. He explained:

I learned about conflict transformation, with the intention of going back to Africa and using these skills, especially with refugees. When I returned to the Africa Region in August, 1997, Dan Ohmann was ending his service in the camps, so I moved into his position. I worked with the JRS.

In 1995 there were many camps, containing hundreds of thousands of people, and JRS was in charge of coordinating all the pastoral workers in the camps. It was a huge responsibility. At the same time, JRS was starting a radio station in Ngara, to broadcast to the people of the refugee camps. Schwinghamer joined JRS, lived with the Jesuits in Ngara, and did pastoral work in Lukole Camp, fifteen miles from Ngara.

Ohmann had built a small house just outside Lukole Camp and lived there with a few other pastoral workers. Schwinghamer, however, used that house only in the day time more as an office. He was part of a pastoral team of ten people, priests and Sisters, both expatriate missionaries and diocesan, who had worked in Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, plus one priest who came down from Austria. Schwinghamer said they tried to develop a pastoral plan but were not too successful at this, as they were living in three separate places. Furthermore, they spoke different languages and not everyone knew either English or Swahili. In fact, English was not a useful language for pastoral work in the camps. Burundi people spoke Kirundi but many of them also knew Swahili. The

Rwandese spoke Kinyarwanda and also French. French was probably the most useful and widely spoken language by people living in the camps – other than their own languages – but a pastoral worker who knew Swahili was also acceptable. Schwinghamer described the various types of pastoral work they did:

Pastoral work involved many different types of activities, but we were very restricted in what we could do in the camps. The camps were legally under the Tanzania Ministry of Home Affairs but were administered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). At the height of the crisis there were forty other NGOs in the camps and JRS was just one of them.

We could do sacramental work in the Church areas of the camp and run Services. We were supposed to stay in those areas but in fact we were pretty free to do many other things. We organized SCCs in the streets, ran seminars and training programs, and Dan established a post-primary school, which was actually a secondary school, something forbidden by the UN. But they allowed the fiction of a post-primary school. Maryknoll funded this school and the refugees themselves managed it. A lot of the work was simply just visiting people. We also worked with the different movements that the Burundian Catholics had brought with them from Burundi.

There were about seven primary schools in the camp, a large hospital, a market area, a power mill for grinding grain, and some commercial shops. All the denominations were allowed to build temporary church structures.

There were five centers with churches where we said Sunday Mass. Each was a separate community, with its own catechists, parish council and groups, in a sense five separate parishes. We priests alternated in going to these places. Through the Jesuits we also established a number of day care places for young children not yet in school, sort of like Montessori Schools. There were also a lot of children, not orphans, roaming around the camps and we tried to set up some kinds of educational activities for them.

The refugees were very interested in learning about computers. We had to get permission to try that. We had a few classes but then it was stopped by the United Nations. They did not want groups of ten people or more coming together. They were afraid of political ramifications.

Before Schwinghamer started in 1997, many of the Rwandans had been forcibly repatriated back to Rwanda in December, 1996, by the Tanzanian Army. Schwinghamer heard that there were many abuses, including rapes and murders, involved in this action but that nothing had been documented. A Canadian White Sister had recorded some information about this, but there was never an official investigation.

The Lumase Camp, just across from Lukole Camp, had accommodated only Rwandans and then became vacant. Several other camps to the north of Lukole were also vacated by the repatriation. Lukole Camp had been mainly Burundian, with about 80,000 people in 1996, but then grew by another 30,000 or so Rwandans. But all were Hutu, with the same language, and were more or less the same people ethnically. Some of the Rwandans lived outside the camps in the bush. According to Schwinghamer, “many of them were thieves, armed, violent and dangerous.” But the Tanzanian Field Force Unit

was responsible for security, and this Unit also had a reputation for being no nonsense and very rough.

Schwinghamer said that another factor that prevented a coordinated pastoral plan was radically different ecclesiologies. This was a problem since the United Nations wanted to know what people were doing and expected the pastoral agents to be working in concert. He elaborated further:

Dan Ohmann had initiated the Tanzanian model of Small Christian Communities, organized geographically on the streets. To do that with the Burundian refugee Catholics meant you had to introduce a different concept of Church. Their experience was more along the lines of religious movements, such as the Legion of Mary, groups for youth, for young, newly married couples, and other types of religious groups. So, people would come together from different parts of the camp for their particular pietistic types of religious activities.

We began training programs on developing SCCs, on bible study, and to explain the difference between one group and another. People seemed to like this, as they could organize self-help activities, especially regarding food – sharing food and providing food to those without food cards.

Schwinghamer further explained that Small Christian Communities were introduced late into Burundi, only in the 1980s. They never took root as the Burundian Church was very hierarchical and the Catholic people retained an ingrained predilection for the traditional movements. In the mid-1980s the Burundi government was overthrown and the new President ruled in an autocratic fashion, augmented by severe anti-Catholic bias. Small Christian Communities, misunderstood and looked on with suspicion, were suppressed. Schwinghamer thought that the Burundian Catholics in the refugee camps were able to experience a different model of Church, the one practiced in Tanzania, and he wondered whether this more egalitarian model was able to be transferred back to Burundi in later years.

The political divisions and violence that existed in Burundi and Rwanda was carried over to the refugee camps. In 1995 Dan Ohmann went out regularly to a second camp, called Kitale Camp, about forty miles from the Lukole Camp. This camp was riven with unbridled political divisions, persistent violence and many killings. It was closed in 1996; Burundians were taken to the Lukole Camp and Rwandese were forced back to Rwanda.

Schwinghamer stayed in Lukole Camp up till March, 1999. At that time he wanted to return to the United States to provide care for his brother, who was paralyzed with a progressive disease. There were four other priests to serve the camp, a sufficient number in his estimation. Thus, he concluded his contract and went to the U.S.

At the time of Schwinghamer's departure there were new outbreaks of ethnic violence and some of the workers on their pastoral team were falsely accused of being Tutsi sympathizers, putting them in danger of being killed. For their protection, they had to be moved elsewhere.

There was a need to do research and an evaluation of life in the camps in the aftermath of the genocide, according to Schwinghamer. Some of the former residents

who were leaders in the camps began writing their own reflections. Some moved to Nairobi and others were able to migrate to Canada. Schwinghamer kept up communications with a number of them and also wrote his own reflections in various Maryknoll publications.

When Schwinghamer left, a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, Merwin De Mello, came to work in the camps and stayed there until the spring of 2004. As a result of his experience De Mello went on to take studies in peace and conflict resolution back in the United States.

In the late 1990s most Rwandans in camps in Tanzania returned to Rwanda, whereas the Burundians remained in Tanzania. The Burundi Civil War continued on till 2003. In Rwanda in 1995 there were reprisals carried out by recent recruits into the RPF forces; in the Kibeho Camp in Butare Province, Australian soldiers in UNAMIR stated that the RPF killed 4,000 internally displaced Hutu. Outside observers have estimated that from 1994 to 1996 as many as 100,000 Hutu may have been killed in Rwanda. Naturally, Paul Kagame's government denies this.

Rwanda was also being attacked from the much bigger camps in Zaire, led by Hutu militia called Interahamwe. In response, the RPF joined forces with Ugandan troops and Tutsi forces in Zaire, called the Banyamulenge, to assist rebel groups in Zaire led by Laurent-Desire Kabila to attack the forces of Mobutu Sese Seko. Mobutu was overthrown in May, 1997, and Mobutu fled into exile in Europe, where he died shortly later. The country was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This action in effect eliminated the risk of attacks on Rwanda from Congo. However, fighting continued in Congo, for power and for control of the vast mineral riches of eastern Congo.

In Rwanda Paul Kagame rescinded the rule requiring citation of ethnicity on national Identification Cards, stated that the government's policy was national unification, integrated the army with Hutu soldiers, and with international help initiated reforms leading to rapid economic growth. As of 1995 Rwanda's population had dropped to just slightly above 5 million, but by 2003 it had risen to almost 8.5 million. International investors flocked to Kigali. Although Rwanda has remained peaceful and has growing prosperity, Kagame has maintained tight control over government and has in effect abrogated democracy. His security forces have also been blamed for several assassinations of Rwandan critics of Kagame and his authoritarian rule, who were living in exile in other countries. Kagame has also been accused of profiting from the international sale of rare, highly valuable mineral resources from eastern Congo.

Rwanda tried to prosecute those responsible for the genocide and in 1998 there were 100,000 languishing in cramped, squalid detention camps built to accommodate only 18,000 inmates. Many lawyers and judges had been killed, making prosecution almost impossible. In April, 1997, twenty-two people were executed by firing squad but after that there were no more executions. In July, 2007, capital punishment was abolished in Rwanda.

As of the end of the year 2000 only 3,343 cases had been adjudicated and the government decided to utilize the local traditional courts, called Gacaca Courts, for the bulk of the cases. These courts use tribal forms of interethnic discussions and indigenous symbols, with the objectives of establishing the truth, eliciting sincere apologies, offering forgiveness and reconciliation, and implementing what is called restorative justice. These

courts sat in local venues, including under symbolic trees, for eleven years and adjudicated over one million cases, achieving notable successes at reconciliation. However, there were criticisms that the RPF controlled this process and that no Tutsi were tried for abuses of Hutu, resulting in their termination in 2012.

An International Criminal Court for Rwanda was set up in Arusha, Tanzania, for trying high-level planners and perpetrators of the genocide. Despite the outlay of millions of dollars over some fifteen years, very few people were tried and convicted in the Arusha Court. This court was closed in 2014.

As of 2016, it seems that Rwanda's impressive economic growth and the efforts at interethnic reconciliation have mitigated the ethnic tensions that existed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, proffering the nation hope that peace can last.

### BUKUNDI PARISH:

In February, 2009, Fr. Ed Schoellmann, after working for Maryknoll in his home State of Texas for some twenty-five years, decided to return to Tanzania. He was not sure where to go at first, but as he had worked in Ndoleleji in the 1960s and Maryknoll still had a presence there in 2009, he went there to confer with Dan Ohmann and Don Sybertz. They informed him that they and the priests at Mwanhuzi Parish would like to see Bukundi developed as a parish. It was a major centre of Mwanhuzi and was just beginning to develop as a town and government centre.

Bukundi is located at the farthest eastern end of Shinyanga Diocese, only some twenty miles west of Lake Eyasi. Sukuma people have migrated to the area around Bukundi, but due to its dry, hot climate the surroundings are sparsely populated. The town itself is multi-ethnic: the majority are Sukuma but there are other ethnic groups, such as Iramba and Ikizu. Once beyond the little town one enters into territory reserved for the Wataturu people. In 2012 the commercial center of the town was just a small, dusty village with a smattering of business enterprises. Wataturu come into the village, to shop or just hang out. The government had already allocated and fenced off large areas of the town for future development, such as a hospital and government offices. There was already in 2012 a large primary school, a secondary school, and a health center. According to Schoellmann, Bukundi is located on the road projected to be the major trunk road between Arusha and Mwanza and when this road is constructed Bukundi is expected to grow rapidly. However, in 2012 he had to travel to Mwanhuzi, 50 kilometres to the north, for any major purchases, especially for building supplies.

Although Bukundi was a part of Mwanhuzi Parish, Schoellmann moved to Ndoleleji, in order to be a part of a Maryknoll community. He set about building a large church, rectory, and catechist's house in Bukundi. As of February, 2012, the catechist's house had been completed and the catechist and his family were living at Bukundi. The church walls and roof had been completed, with mainly just the plastering to be done. The large, two-story rectory was also almost complete, with plumbing, electrical wiring, and plastering remaining to be done. At the end of 2012, the rectory was completed and Schoellmann moved in. Prior to that he had been sleeping in a room in the back of the church.

The church is an enormous, cruciform church. Schoellmann explained that he wanted a big church because all the original churches built in the 1960s turned out to be too small once the diocese started growing. Between the main part of the church and the two side extensions retractable partitions were installed, to enable the church to be used for multiple purposes, including for men and women to sleep overnight when seminars were held for more than one day. These multi-purpose sections could also be used for other purposes on weekdays during the week.

Schoellmann said that Bukundi had a number of outstations and adult faith formation would be one of his primary goals, once the church was sufficiently completed. A windmill was installed at a river two kilometres away; this pumps enough water to the mission compound for the rectory, catechist's house, and for groups that stay overnight in the church for several days.

Funding for the church, rectory and other buildings came from Maryknoll. However, Schoellmann expected the Christians to contribute towards the purchase of benches and other items in the church, in order to instill a mindset of self-reliance in the parishioners. Until Bukundi develops large government and business sectors, it seems unlikely that the parish's Catholics will be able to contribute very much. However, with the major construction costs behind them, the parishioners should be able to provide for on-going parish expenses.

Farming in that area is very tenuous, except for the few small plots around people's homes in the town that have access to water that can be used for irrigation. With irrigation, these small plots produce bountiful harvests. However, there is insufficient water for more widespread irrigation.

Although the catechist was viewed as a full-time parish catechist, it is diocesan policy in Shinyanga Diocese not to pay a salary to catechists. The rationale for this is that few parishes in the diocese can afford a full-time salary; in fact, most parishes can barely afford upkeep for the priests. Schoellmann said that he was able to pay stipends to the catechist for specific types of work in the parish. Between the stipends and being given a house to live in for free, which included water, electricity (eventually), and a plot on which to grow household food items, the catechist had fair remuneration, in Schoellmann's estimation.

The rectory is able to accommodate six people comfortably and Schoellmann hoped that several other Maryknollers would join him living at Bukundi. Although the place is very hot, evenings are pleasant due to the dry climate. A community of three priests, including one or two retired priests, might find this parish a satisfying spot in which to engage in part-time ministry. Schoellmann thought that Bukundi would also be a good place for someone to use as a base for outreach to the Wataturu people. However, as of 2016 there were only two other Maryknoll priests working in Shinyanga Diocese and neither was interested in moving to Bukundi. The priests of the future will be diocesan priests.

The expectation that Bukundi would become a major crossroads on a tarmac road might eventually happen, but probably not in the near future. Bariadi was named in 2016 a regional center for a new government Region, called Simiyu Region. Most likely the trunk road from Arusha will pass through Bariadi and go on to Mwanza from there. That road would be thirty or forty miles north of Bukundi, skirting the southern boundary of

Serengeti Park. However, given the infrastructure planning for Bukundi, sooner or later the town will develop. At least the parish is ready for this.