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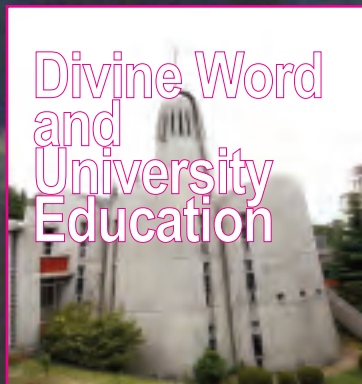


# Divine Word

**Missionaries Magazine**

Mission Updates from Around the World

Spring 2011



# Editorial

**DATELINE:  
MARCH 28, 2011  
URGENT NEED**

## **RELIEF EFFORTS FOR JAPAN**

There are 135 Divine Word Missionaries in Japan. We do not have parishes or schools in the area directly impacted by the earthquake or tsunami.

We advise anyone who would like to donate to relief efforts in Japan to give their gift through Caritas, the international Catholic relief organization. The head of Caritas Japan is a Divine Word Missionary, Bishop Tarcisio Kikuchi Isao SVD.

You may donate directly to Caritas by going to [www.caritas.org](http://www.caritas.org) or donations may be sent to: Divine Word Missionaries P.O. Box 6099, Techny, IL 60082 and we will forward it to Caritas. Please indicate in a note or on the check that the donation is for "Japanese Relief."

Divine Word Missionaries became involved in higher education when the Vatican asked our missionary community to take over the administration of Fu Jen University in Peking, China, in 1933. The superior general, Fr. Joseph Grendel SVD, wrote, "The university furthers the work of the (China) mission in a most effective way, and it is in tune with the charism of our founder."

Reflecting on the role of education in missionary work, our current superior general, Father Antonio Pernia SVD, has written, "Catholic schools remain precisely a unique platform for the Christian formation of the laity—places where the Word of God may be heard and imbibed, so that it may be lived out and witnessed to in the larger society. Thus, aside from being an instrument for the evangelization of cultures, Catholic schools are also an important means for the cultivation of partnership and collaboration with the laity."

In this issue of *Divine Word Missionaries Magazine*, we feature articles by three missionaries involved in university education. Father Francis Budenholzer SVD writes from Fu Jen University in Taipei, Father Robert Riemer SVD writes from Nanzan University in Japan, and Father Yulius Yasinto SVD traces the history of Widya Mandira Catholic University in Kupang, Indonesia.

Father Roger Schroeder SVD, a professor at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, employs his academic background to advance interreligious dialogue. He discusses his visit to Indonesia where he was able to engage Muslim graduate students.

Father Mathew Chennakudy SVD in India is involved in education through publishing, an apostolate that was dear to our founder's heart.

In stark contrast to our modern universities, the article by Rob Kundert is about one of our Sudanese seminarians who visited "classrooms" in his home country. Students in open-air classrooms lack even the basic school supplies.

Finally, I invite our readers to meet Dominique, a young student in New Jersey who hatched an ambitious plan to help the missions as her confirmation service project.



Bro. Dennis Newton SVD  
Mission Director

Contact me any time; my e-mail address is:  
[director@svdmissions.org](mailto:director@svdmissions.org)

# DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

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...awakened to the sound of gunfire... Barefoot and alone, the seven-year-old fled his home in the farming village of Abul. He ran off into the night, leaving behind his parents, a brother, and a sister.

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cover photo: Petra Bigge SSpS, Sudan



## Catholic Education: An Important Ministry in Asia-Oceania

**Francis Budenholzer SVD**

Divine Word Missionaries operates six universities, all in the Asia-Pacific Zone of our international community: Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan; Fu Jen University, Taipei, Taiwan; San Carlos University, Cebu, Philippines; Holy Name University, Bohol, Philippines; Widya Mandira Catholic University, Kupang, Timor, Indonesia; and Divine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea. In several of the countries, Divine Word Missionaries sponsors junior colleges and, in India, sponsors high-level research institutes, particularly in fields related to anthropology and missiology.

There are wide differences in these five institutions, reflecting the very different economic, technological, and educational situations of the populations they serve. All of the universities had their beginnings as Divine Word Missionary institutions after the closure of Fu Jen Catholic University in Beijing as a Catholic institution in 1952. In the beginning, the institutions focused on their contributions to the developing countries where they were situated. Quality tertiary education was a scarce resource and the Divine Word Missionaries provided high quality university education to many who, without our contribution, would not have had the opportunity. Another special characteristic of these institutions in the early years was the large number of Divine Word Missionary priests and Brothers, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, and priests and religious from other congregations who taught and administered the universities.

Already in the 1970s, a gradual shift was taking place in international higher education. This is



sometimes referred to as the “massification” of higher education. Beginning first in the United States but then spreading to Europe and much of the rest of the world, the opportunities for tertiary education increased dramatically. In some countries, this has been accompanied by a decrease in population growth, leading to what some would consider an oversupply of university resources.

For Divine Word Missionary universities, this shift has brought challenges, financial and otherwise. But challenges are often also opportunities. Catholic universities around the world were forced to ask what made them special as Catholic institutions. As put in a recent Divine Word publication “SVD Education Ministry as Mission of Dialogue” (SVD Generalate 2010): “Students in our schools—can they be recognized as products of an SVD institution?” It is a question being asked around the world in Catholic schools: What makes Catholic schools special? Are graduates of Catholic schools any different than graduates of other colleges and universities?

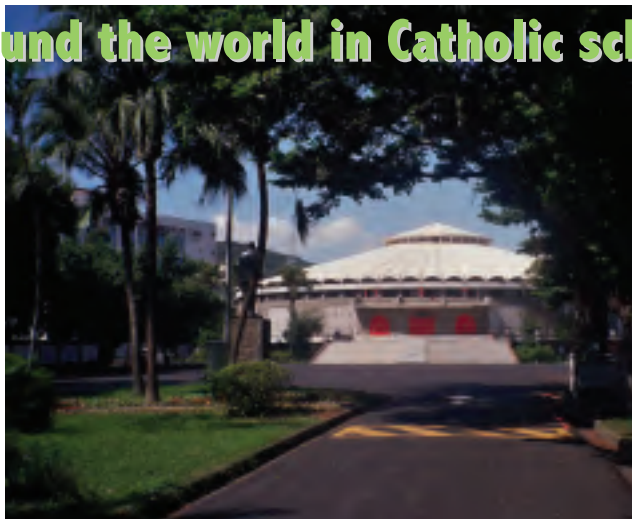
Another important event was the publication in August 1990 of the apostolic constitution on Catholic universities by Pope John Paul II, often known by its Latin name *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (From the Heart of the Church). The document forced Catholic educators to ask what it meant for their college or university to be known as a Catholic college or university. Its Catholic character should permeate the institution in its teaching, research, service, and its institutional standing. Catholic character is not something confined to the chaplain’s office or to departments of theology.

**6** universities in the  
Asia-Pacific zone:  
**Nanzan**  
University Nagoya, Japan  
**Fu Jen**  
University, Taipei, Taiwan  
**San Carlos**  
University, Cebu,  
Philippines  
**Holy Name**  
University, Bohol,  
Philippines  
**Widya  
Mandira  
Catholic**  
University, Kupang, Timor,  
Indonesia  
**Divine Word**  
University, Madang, Papua  
New Guinea

# It is a question being asking around the world in Catholic schools:

Another challenge has been the decreasing numbers of religious and priests available for work in the Divine Word universities. Forty years ago, many teachers and most department chairpersons, deans, and presidents were religious or priests. Now, most are lay persons. But as with other challenges, this change is also an opportunity. All Christians are called by their baptismal promises to share their faith, not just religious and priests. Lay faculty and administrators are the partners with Divine Word Missionaries and Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in the field of education.

Divine Word Missionaries has added another dimension to the conversation on our particular role in education with the publication “SVD Education Ministry as Mission of Dialogue.” *Prophetic dialogue* has become the key concept for understanding our missionary apostolate. Dialogue implies a respectful listening to the other. In Asia and Oceania, this dialogue takes place between those of different religious traditions, different economic situations, different ethnic groups, and different nationalities. Universities and colleges are preeminent venues for such dialogue. Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, and the various folk religious traditions are all represented among our students and faculty. In some of our universities, interreligious dialogue is carried out through high-level conferences and course offerings. In all of our universities, there is the “dialogue of life” where believers from various religious traditions share their life as a community of faculty, administrators, and students.



# What makes Catholic schools special? Are graduates of Catholic schools any different than graduates of other colleges and universities?

But dialogue does not mean we Divine Word Missionaries can forget our own faith commitment. Thus we speak of *prophetic* dialogue. In interreligious dialogue, we share our own faith in Jesus with others. Our faith commitment is not somehow “watered down.” Nor do we expect anything less of our dialogue partners. Our commitment to social justice and environmental stewardship must be maintained. Classes in topics such as professional ethics and activities to help the poor and disadvantaged are central to our university apostolate.

In facing these new challenges, Divine Word Missionary universities and colleges of the Asia-Pacific Zone cannot forget their roots. Quality education is central. Students must be helped to think independently and critically. They must also be provided with the education they need to serve society in whatever career they have chosen. Society needs good engineers, good lawyers, good teachers, good managers, and good scientists. But as graduates of a Catholic, Divine Word Missionary institution, we hope there is something more, namely, a commitment to caring for all people, a commitment to social justice and the integrity of creation. In many of our schools, very few of our students are Christian. For some, their university experience has led them to embrace the Christian faith. For other graduates, it is our hope that they leave our colleges and universities with a deep respect and better understanding of the Catholic tradition and an enhanced respect for all religious traditions. ♦

Can you imagine... every morning of every day, desperately searching for food to eat and clean water to drink?

Divine Word Missionaries work in communities so remote that often even basic services do not exist. There is no electricity or drinkable water. Medicine and doctors are in short supply, if available at all. Education as we know it does not exist.



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# The Catholic University: A Missionary Enterprise

Robert Riemer SVD

Nanzan University in Nagoya is the window for the Church in central Japan. As the leading private university in the area, over 15,000 students a year seek admission, although only 2,200 can be accepted. Nanzan is well known for its Catholic spirit, academic excellence, and character formation. It is an effective means to spread the message of Jesus and to supplement the direct teaching of the Gospel given at Catholic mission schools and parishes.

I arrived in Japan in 1961 with an appointment to teach at Nanzan, one of twenty-one Catholic universities in the country. The tasks of a missionary-educator are manifold. Besides being a classroom teacher and a professional scholar, the missionary-educator is asked to be student counselor, spiritual director, and leader in volunteer activities. Likewise, he is often burdened with the care and anxieties of university administration.

Presently, Nanzan University has more than 10,000 students in seven departments, a business administration school, and a law school. A glance at the activities in which Divine Word Missionary educators have been engaged gives a good understanding of the various works of the missionary-educator.

Father John Seland SVD, English professor and author, has led Nanzan students into various paths of volunteer work in Japan and abroad. Father John Schubert SVD, dynamic university chaplain, has introduced countless students to shrines, churches, and holy sites on yearly pilgrimages and tours to Europe. Father John Hirschmeier SVD, former



president of Nanzan University, was a popular presenter of public lectures on Japanese business and Christian ethics. On the other hand, Father Karl Hamaguchi SVD, professor of moral theology, has become nationally known for his lectures on medical ethics. Father David Mayer SVD, kingpin for the graduate school, was a familiar figure at scholarly English academic meetings where he pointed out the abiding influence of Christianity on English and American Literature. The founder of Nanzan University, Father Alois Pache SVD, will be forever remembered for giving the university its motto: *Hominus Dignitati* (For Human Dignity). Under this title, non-Christian students learn of Jesus' law of love of God and man, the Old Testament teaching that the human being is made in the image of God, and the moral precept that all life is sacred.

Catholic universities are not the only instrument to promote the evangelization of peoples and the uplifting of human culture, but they are an approved and respected method, especially in Asia where education is highly esteemed. It is the way which Divine Providence has entrusted to us. We are determined to use it well.

I would like to introduce you to some of the graduates who have reflected on how important and influential Nanzan education has been in their lives. ♦



*Hiroshi A. Usami*  
*President and CEO*  
*Micron Shiga, Inc.*  
*Shiga University of Medical Science*



Nanzan University is exactly the place where the “international community of my heart” was inspired, thanks to the many Divine Word Missionary priests and Brothers I encountered at Nanzan University. I had a chance to visit Techny a few years ago and I visited the cemetery where my former professors are resting in peace. It meant a lot to me to remember the parts of my life which I shared with them at Nanzan.

My experience in developing global business pharmaceuticals, medical devices and diagnostics; assisting U.S. venture companies as they enter and grow within Japan; overseeing corporate due diligence; and orchestrating post-merger integration required all the skills which I was taught at Nanzan. Thus, *Hominis Dignitati* (For Human Dignity) has been an important aspect of my life. My international career finally pushed me up to the president of a venture company of a medical university in Japan.

Nanzan taught me not only foreign languages but also strengthened my Christian faith. While studying English and German, I studied organ and liturgical music as part of extracurricular programs. I still play the organ in church every Sunday. Dr. Chiaki Mukai, the first Japanese female astronaut, said, “The universe is my workplace.” Although I am not going to that extreme, I am confident that I can say, “The globe is my workplace” thanks to all that I was granted at Nanzan University.



*Takimitsu Yamada*

I had the good fortune to study at the “New Nanzan Campus,” which opened its doors to students in 1964. Its dynamic architecture and innovative professors helped make the university one of the leading private education institutions in central Japan. When I graduated I became an office employee of the university and witnessed its growth until I retired in 2005. As a Catholic, I valued Nanzan’s position to preserve its Catholic identity. The university’s motto, *For Human Dignity*, keeps the teaching of Christ in the forefront of education. I worked under four Divine Word Missionary presidents and appreciated their efforts to train men and women to take on responsible positions in the Church, in society, and in families. Diplomats and company presidents, priests, Brothers and bishops, model fathers and mothers have graduated from Nanzan University. I am grateful to have studied at Nanzan and to have spent thirty-seven years working for the development of the university.



*Kinko Ito, Ph.D.*

*Professor of Sociology*

*University of Arkansas at Little Rock*

My years at Nanzan (1976–1980) were truly a blessed time for me. I had great professors who taught me well, and I still have my best friends from my English composition class after thirty-four years!

I studied at Illinois State University for a year as an exchange student in 1977–1978. In the 1980s, I visited Father Leo Hotze SVD, the brother of Father Alphonse Hotze SVD, at the Divine Word community at Techny. By chance, I met Father Robert Riemer’s mother at Techny at the same time.

In 1987, I obtained my doctoral degree from Ohio State University, and currently I am professor of sociology at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. I have visited seventy-four countries and teach my students with love and understanding. I am active in an international peace movement, too. I want to make a difference in the world and I will be carrying the Nanzan spirit with me for the rest of my life.



# Nightmares and Dreams

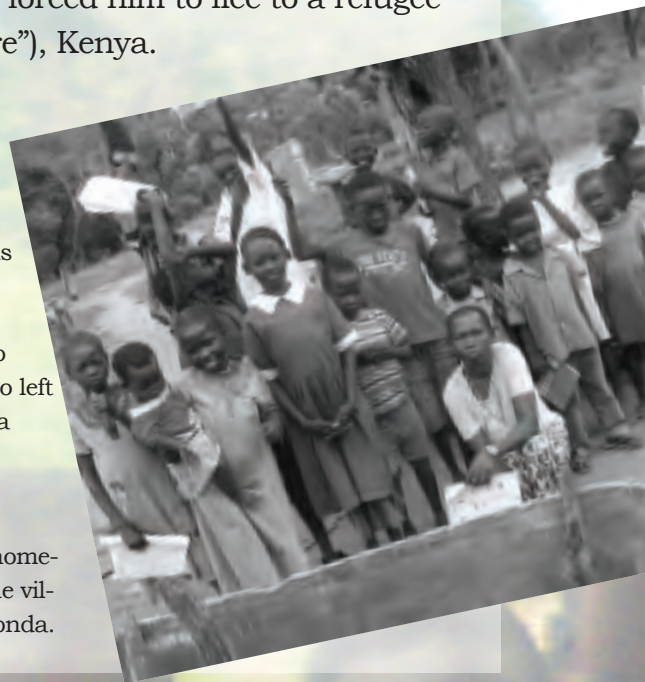
Rob Kundert

Joseph Okello, one of the tragically famous “Lost Boys of Sudan,” awakened to the sound of gunfire one night in 1987. Barefoot and alone, the seven-year-old fled his home in the farming village of Abul. He ran off into the night, leaving behind his parents, a brother, and a sister. After a dangerous trek, Joseph found his way to the Red Cross refugee camp in Panyudo, Ethiopia. He stayed there for four years until the outbreak of war in Ethiopia forced him to flee to a refugee camp in Kakuma (the Swahili word for “nowhere”), Kenya.

It was in Kakuma that Joseph, now age fourteen, was able to attend school for the first time in his life. Joseph wanted to return to Sudan to look for his parents, but a priest uncle convinced him that it was too dangerous. He remained in Kakuma and continued his studies. Eventually, Joseph did learn that his parents were still alive.

Beginning in 2001, a number of the “Lost Boys” were allowed to immigrate to the United States. The day came when Joseph also left the refugee camp. He arrived in the United States in 2007 and a year later enrolled as a seminarian at Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa.

In 2010, Joseph returned to Africa for the first time. Abul, his hometown, no longer existed because it was destroyed in the war. The villagers had fled into a nearby forest to another village called Awonda.





*There are more than 470  
students between  
the ages of ten and thirty.*



*Classes in  
mathematics,  
English, and social  
studies,  
are held in the open,  
sometimes under  
a tree.*

Last July, Joseph traveled to Awonda by motorcycle and reunited with his family. "My family is fine. Very glad to see me," he said of their reunion. "My mother was crying. She might have forgotten my face."

Meeting people and renewing old acquaintances filled Joseph's days. It was not long before he was put to work. "When I went, I didn't have the intention of teaching, but I went to see the school," he said. "They invited me to talk at first. I spoke to them. They asked me many questions, especially about American schools. They responded by saying, 'You come and teach.'"

In the village, there are more than 470 students between the ages of ten and thirty. They attend two "schools," although there are no school buildings. Classes, like the ones Joseph taught in mathematics, English, and social studies, are held in the open, sometimes under a tree. Students and teachers often lack school supplies such as pencils, paper, and textbooks.

Joseph returned to the seminary to begin a new semester last fall, but thoughts of Sudan and his dreams for the future always occupy his mind. Although Divine Word Missionaries are not working in Sudan, Joseph's dream is that, one day,

**VIEW** a video from Sudan, go to:  
*Online* **svdmissions.org/sudan**



missionaries will be sent to his beloved homeland. Joseph even wrote a letter to the superior general of Divine Word Missionaries, Father Antonio Pernia SVD, to introduce himself and plant a seed in the superior general's mind. He wrote: "I am really very happy with the great work Divine Word Missionaries are doing world-wide. I would like to register my request with you to consider Sudan if you are planning to open new missions in Africa. I think our missionaries will help to bring Christ into the hearts of many Sudanese who did not hear about him yet. Sudan needs more missionaries."

Joseph reflects on his new journey and says, "As my life shows, I went through many difficulties and I do say that God has a plan for me, and that is why he let me survive through all these hardships. Many of my friends were eaten by wild animals and many more died from sickness, hunger or thirst. As I was going through all these trials, I never suffered from any disease or even had a headache. That is why I say God was protecting me so that I may follow the plan that he has for me. I pray that God keeps up his protection for me so that I can follow his work of helping people and doing something for the Church." ♦

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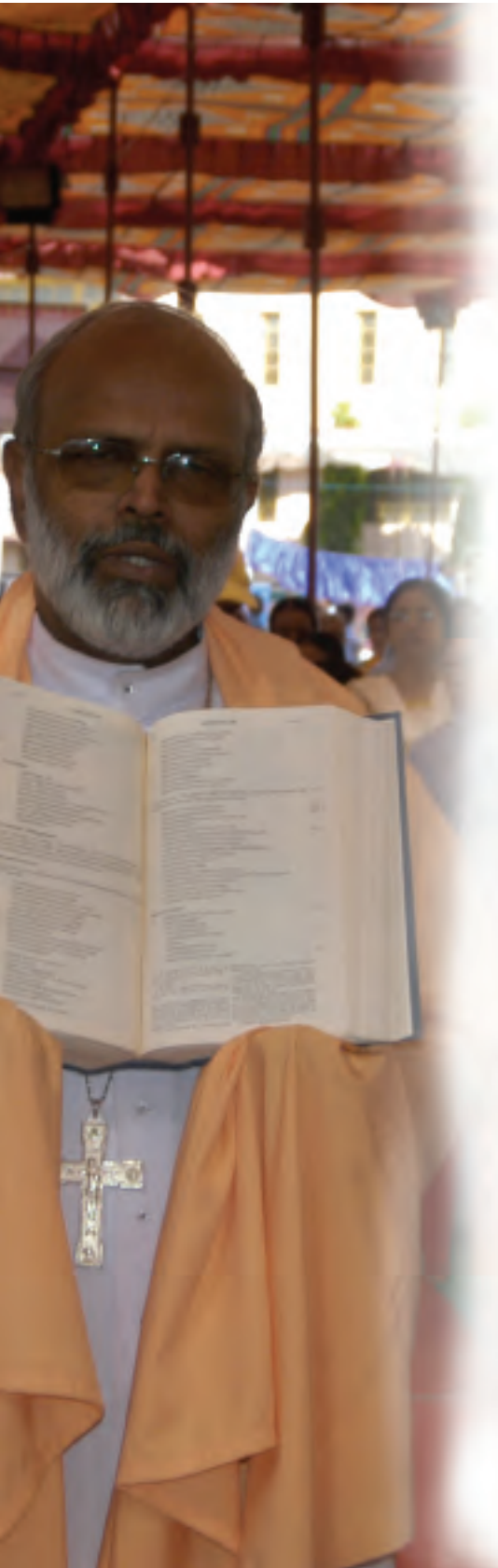

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- Thousands of orphaned children, whose threadbare clothing barely keeps them warm...*
- An elderly woman in desperate need of medical assistance...*
- The global food crisis nearly starving entire communities...*
- Preventable diseases go untreated...*
- Sexually exploited children need physical and emotional care...*
- With no clean water, hundreds of villagers pray for rain...*





## A Testimony to the Holy Spirit: How *The Word Among Us* Came About in India

Mathew Chennakudy SVD

As Divine Word Missionaries in India celebrates the tenth year of publishing our family bible magazine, *The Word Among Us*, I trace its foundation to the spirit of Vatican II, the founding of the magazine in the United States, and my chance meeting with the editor.

In 1959, the newly elected Pope John XXIII announced his intention to convene the Second Vatican Council. The inspiration for the council came, Pope John said, as a revelation from the Holy Spirit, a sense he had in prayer that the Spirit wanted to bring a fresh wind of renewal upon the Church and the world. Over the forty-four years since the council ended, the winds of renewal have been blowing very powerfully. Parishes have seen a dramatic increase in prayer groups, in bible studies, in lay ministries, and in social and evangelistic outreaches.

In 1999, as I began my journalism studies at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Jeff Smith, the editor of the American edition of *The Word Among Us*. He was looking for someone to publish the magazine in India. Fortunately, our charism as Divine Word Missionaries was well suited for the ministry of *The Word Among Us*. From our founding days, Divine Word Missionaries have used magazines to spread the faith. In fact, our founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, published *The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. Upon my return to India, I was eager to get started, so I presented my plan to then provincial Father Chacko Thottumarickal SVD, who gave his full endorsement to the project.

If communications, especially the print medium, have an influence on shaping the faith and values in Christian families, then *The Word Among Us* addresses this need. It inspires readers to follow the daily Mass readings and to reflect on life through prayer, scripture, and the teachings of the Church. The articles are rich resources for an individual's spiritual life and a benefit to families. The prayers in the magazine give a better road map and a deeper meaning to relationship with the Lord.



In the last ten years, we have improved in every area. *The Word Among Us* is printed in our own Satprachar Press in Indore. Our editorial and marketing teams are made up of persons deeply committed to helping people come closer to the Lord through prayer and scripture. We believe God is using our meager efforts to touch people's lives. The magazine has helped us build up our missions in the interior villages of central India. Through the financial contributions of our readers and the advertisement in the magazine, we are able to support the education and settlement of orphans and poor children of the countryside.

To celebrate our tenth anniversary, we organized and hosted a bible *mahotsav* (convention) in the Indore province of Divine Word Missionaries. This celebration of the Word of God took place from October 1–3, 2010, on the campus of St. Paul's High School. The festival began with a processional dance in which the Holy Bible was carried from the entrance gate to the dais. Former Divine Word provincial and now the Ordinary of the Diocese of Indore, Bishop Chacko Thottumarickal SVD delivered the keynote address to a gathering of eight thousand people from various states of central India. The bishop asked each person to give time to God, who is the driving force behind every living being.

The retreat directors inspired the audience to make their family lives stronger and become messengers

of love and peace. "If the family is weak, then society is weak, and if the society is weak, the nation is weak," said Fr. Anil Dev. Other talks delivered during the convention and the spiritual exercises sparked the divine flame in the gathering and the people experienced many spiritual blessings.

Thousands of bibles were made available during the convention and the entire crowd enjoyed the wonderful food and comfortable accommodations. Rosaries and T-shirts bearing the name of *The Word Among Us* were distributed to participants.

Archbishop Leo Cornelio SVD of the Diocese of Bhopal presided at the Eucharistic celebration on Sunday. Scores of priests, Brothers, sisters, and Catholic laity from all parts of Madhya Pradesh were present. The participation in the convention by different religious groups, castes, and people from all walks of life bore testimony to the religious harmony and friendly relations existing in the city of Indore.

As I look back, I feel very humbled. I know that the Holy Spirit is the true founder of *The Word Among Us* and is at the root of this ministry. We are all very grateful to have the opportunity and honor of serving the Lord in this way, and there are times when we feel overwhelmed by this responsibility. Now, as we look to the years ahead, we ask the Holy Spirit to remain with us and to keep blessing us with a deep outpouring of divine life and love. ♦

# INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN AN INDONESIAN MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

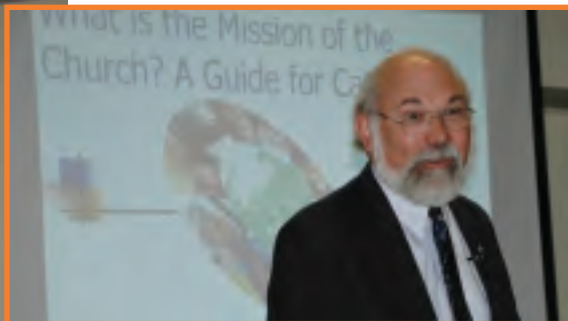
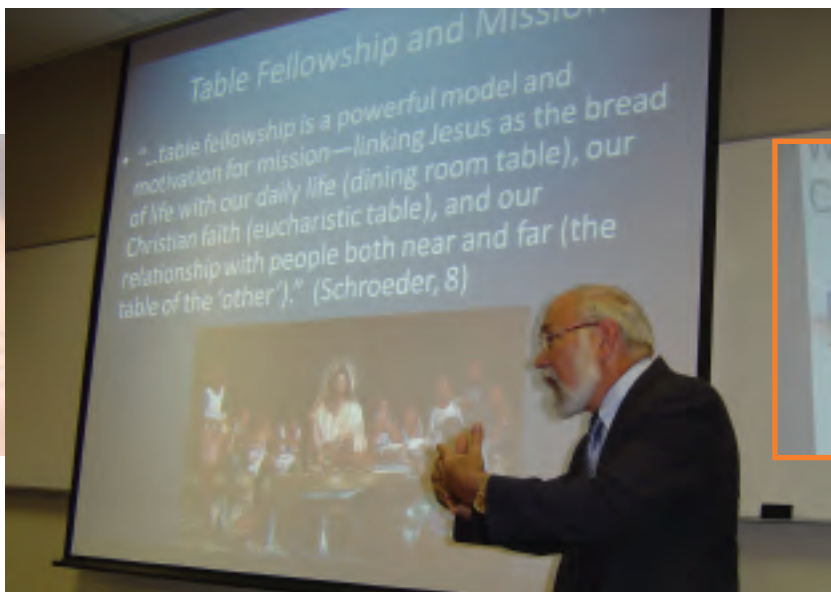
Roger Schroeder SVD



From the time I was twelve years old, I dreamed of being a “bush missionary.” I actually fulfilled my dream by working with villagers of Papua New Guinea as a Divine Word Missionary for five years (1975–1977, 1980–1983). However, I was asked by our Divine Word superiors to do further studies to be qualified for work in higher education. I then spent another five years getting licentiate and doctorate degrees at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in the field of missiology (mission studies).

For the past twenty years, I have been teaching at Catholic Theological Union at Chicago (CTU), the largest Catholic graduate school of theology in the United States. Although I had to adjust my childhood image of what it meant for me to be missionary, I have come to see how I continue to be a missionary through my teaching and writing. Over these years, I have taught and mentored many men and women preparing to serve God’s mission in the Church and in the world—laity, seminarians, priests, Brothers, and sisters; physicians, lawyers, homemakers, social workers, and teachers; Catholics, Protestants, and Pentecostals. My students are working within and outside the United States. And since 2002, we have some Muslim students at CTU. Let me tell you a fascinating story about one of them.

In 2007, Dr. Syafa’atun (Syafa) Almirzanah of Indonesia became the first Muslim woman to graduate from CTU by earning a doctor of ministry degree (along with a second doctorate from the Lutheran School of Theology). She studied at a Catholic school so that she



could better understand and appreciate Christianity and help other Muslims to do the same. Building bridges of respect and understanding among the followers of other religions is also a part of God's mission of love. During her time of studies at CTU, Syafa with her teenage son often visited the Divine Word Theologate community in Chicago, especially to meet the Indonesian Divine Word Missionaries in residence.

When Syafa heard that I would be traveling and speaking in her country during part of my sabbatical from CTU, she invited me to give a lecture at the Muslim university where she now teaches and is the director of academic affairs. Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University is in Yogyakarta, the major university city of Indonesia on the island of Java. In response to this invitation, I gave a lecture on "Developments of the Catholic Church Understanding of Interreligious Dialogue" to approximately 450 Muslim graduate students. An engaging, respectful, and straightforward question-and-answer period with the students followed. A week after I gave this lecture, Syafa was going to be speaking about interreligious dialogue from a Muslim perspective to a group of Christians in Indonesia. We were building bridges from both sides!

I felt privileged to receive this invitation to speak on interreligious dialogue in Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population, and at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, which is noted for its openness to such dialogue. This opportunity was possible through my missionary work of teaching at CTU and the relationship of trust developed between the Divine Word Missionaries and Syafa. Being a "bush missionary" is one way of being part of God's mission, and being a teacher in higher education is another important way of doing this! ♦



From left to right:  
 Dr. Phil Sahiron, director of the interdisciplinary Islamic studies program; Dr. Roger Schroeder SVD, professor of intercultural studies and ministry (holding the gift he received from the university); Dr. Syafa'atun Almirzanah, director of academic affairs. Photo taken at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

“With God all things are possible.”

## The Impossible Dream

Dennis Newton SVD



I suppose many teenagers write to NFL players. Football players are, after all, heroes to most teens. Sebastian Janikowski of the Oakland Raiders is considered one of the best place kickers in professional football, so he was probably not surprised to see a letter from young Dominique Shenae Rittgers in Newburgh, New Jersey. The letter, however, was not a typical fan letter. Dominique began the letter by reminding the football player that his namesake, St. Sebastian, is the patron of all athletes. She then proceeded to suggest he might wish to honor his patron by helping make possible a new St. Sebastian mission chapel in Sengalanvayal, India.



Dominique was busy sending other letters too. Father John Morrissey got one. He is the pastor of St. Sebastian parish in St. Sebastian, Florida. Would Fr. Morrissey and the parishioners there like to help provide a mission chapel dedicated to St. Sebastian in India? I am sure you can see the theme here, but what is the rest of the story?

The dream of a mission chapel began in Dominique's confirmation class. All of the students were asked to choose a service project. Dominique recalled reading about the need for mission chapels in her grandmother's copy of *Divine Word Missionaries Magazine*. The article showed dilapidated or open-air chapels. The wheels in Dominique's fertile imagination were turning. What if her service project could be giving a chapel to the people of a village in the missions?

Anyone who suggested that raising \$7,000 might be unrealistic was gently met with Dominique's favorite mantra, "With God all things are possible." When Dominique contacted our Mission Center at Techny, Illinois, the coordinator for the mission chapels program told Dominique about the faith community in Sengalanvayal, India. The thatched-roof village chapel dedicated to St. Sebastian had collapsed, and the pastor and people were requesting help for a new chapel. Dominique became a woman with a mission. Literally.

The campaign began with her family and friends, then it expanded. Dominique's aunt and her grandmother, who was also her confirmation sponsor, began searching for parishes in

To:  
Dominique  
and your  
entire  
family  
We  
Thank  
you!



*the letters  
created a  
ripple effect*

the United States dedicated to St. Sebastian. Dominique wrote to the pastors and included a photo of the demolished chapel. Donors were asked to send funds directly to Divine Word Missionaries, where the funds were placed in a special account. According to Dominique, "Some pastors sent money. Some could only send prayers, and I needed them too. My aunt told me the letters were creating a ripple effect." Word of Dominique's project spread far and wide. Within eight months, Dominique reached her goal of raising \$7,000, and the Mission Center transferred the funds to the bishop of the diocese in India for the chapel.

When Dominique received photos of the completed chapel, she was "amazed and astonished." She said, "I wasn't prepared to see such a very beautiful and sturdy chapel. I was amazed how beautiful the new St. Sebastian Chapel is. It stands so strong."

But the ripples that Dominique initiated were still expanding. The pastor of St. Sebastian Church in Dearborn Heights, Michigan, told the principal of St. Sebastian School about the project. The principal and students donated a ciborium for St. Sebastian Chapel.

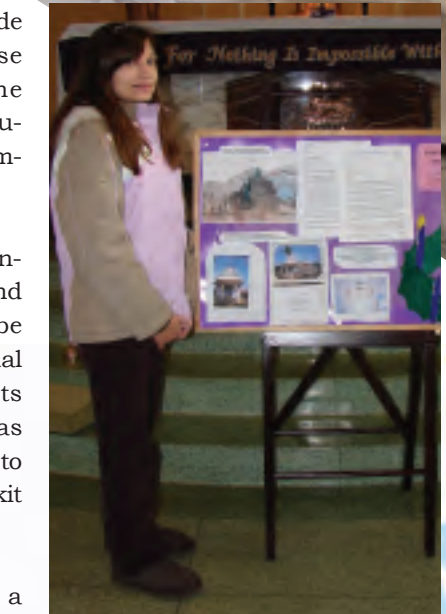
Another person in Dearborn Heights learned of the project and donated

money to have some benches made for the new chapel. Someone else donated a set of vestments. The Knights of Columbus donated a beautiful chalice in memory of their members who passed away in 2010.

When Dominique presented her confirmation project to her teacher and her classmates, they wanted to be part of the project too. At a special Mass for the confirmation students and their parents, a collection was gathered and the funds were used to purchase a nativity set and a Mass kit for St. Sebastian Chapel.

Whenever a benefactor sponsors a chapel, we ask the pastor to place a plaque inside the chapel to honor the donor and to request prayers for the donor's intentions. Dominique asked that the plaque in St. Sebastian Chapel be inscribed with these words, "God loves you, and so do we." Dominique explains, "I am thanking each person for being part of 'we'. We made a difference; we changed lives; we provided a place from which the Word of God can be spread for years to come. I proved that 'with God, all things are possible'."

Thank you, Dominique, for your generosity. Most of all, thank you for your inspiration. It is true that with God, all things are possible, but I know God must be very pleased that he has you for a partner. ♦



*Dominique  
presenting her  
confirmation  
project*

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Yulius Yasinto SVD

Widya Mandira Catholic University, known as UNWIRA, is situated in Kupang, the capital city of East Nusa Tenggara Province in Indonesia. The name *Widya Mandira* means "tower of knowledge."



Divine Word Missionaries began planning for the university in the 1960s to address the need for higher education in East Nusa Tenggara where families with low income could not afford college-level education. With the support of then superior general Heinrich Heekeren SVD, the four Divine Word provincials of Indonesia, the six Catholic bishops (all Divine Word Missionaries), and Catholic laity in East Nusa Tenggara, the university was established on September 24, 1982, with three departments on two campuses. The education and engineering departments were located in Kupang and the philosophy department was in Ledalero, the site of Divine Word Missionaries' St. Paul Major Seminary. Currently, UNWIRA has seven departments with twenty-one undergraduate degrees and one graduate program. All of the departments are now located in Kupang.

Father Yulius Yasinto SVD is the current president of UNWIRA and thirteen other Divine Word Missionaries serve on the faculty. The present enrollment is approximately 4,500 students. ♦

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