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# Divine World

Missionaries Magazine

Winter 2010

Mission Updates from Around the World



**As a missionary,  
a pastor, and just  
a human being,  
I wish I could help  
every child in  
South Africa who  
has lost parents  
from the  
HIV/AIDS  
pandemic. pg. 10**



# Gifts of the Spirit

Mass Kits  
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missions

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and your loved one in prayer.**

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## Editorial

This issue of *Divine Word Missionaries Magazine* takes us to Botswana, India, South Africa, the Philippines, Kenya, and East Timor.

In the Diocese of Khandwa, India, under the guidance of Bishop A. A. Sebastin Durairaj SVD, Sister Ambika and the Sisters of Our Lady of the Garden rescue street children from the horrors of life on the streets.

Father Jean Chrysostome Kiyala SVD is pastor of St. Benedict Church in Malamulele, South Africa. When he and the parishioners of St. Benedict's saw how many children were being orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, they knew they had to take action.

For many decades, Father German Mehler SVD has dedicated himself to helping children who were born with a cleft lip or cleft palate. He has achieved remarkable success by enlisting the help of medical professionals, who donate their time, and benefactors, who support his work.

Our readers are probably familiar with the ministry at Vikas Deepti in the Indian state of Orissa. Father John Maliekal SVD founded Vikas Deepti, the home for children with physical disabilities, and he is now ably assisted by Father Joseph Pais SVD. Fr. Pais provides us with an update on Vikas Deepti.

Divine Word Missionaries often work in very remote parts of the globe and serve people who have been displaced or marginalized. Father Marek Marciniak SVD introduces the San people and the work of Divine Word Missionaries with this impoverished group.

Father Richard Daschbach SVD offers a vivid glimpse of the lives of the people in East Timor.

Finally, Father Carlos Vieira Lima SVD, the rector of our seminary in Nairobi, Kenya, describes how he and the seminarians are doing their best to support themselves with a small herd of dairy cattle.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of our missionary work. Please be assured of our daily remembrance in prayer.

Bro. Dennis Newton SVD  
Mission Director

Contact me any time; my e-mail address is:  
**director@svdmissions.org**

# DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

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**South Africa...  
The country has been  
devastated by the  
HIV/AIDS pandemic.  
Estimates suggest that  
5.7 million people-  
18% of the adult  
population-are living  
with HIV/AIDS. page 10**



A black cow plods  
stupidly by, tethered to  
a wisp of a boy and  
dragging the ages  
along with it. Two other  
lissome sprites, friends  
of the first no doubt,  
prod the heavy-footed  
beast from behind.  
It clomps past, hom,  
hide, and tail, a study  
in idiocy. They are  
leading it to water!  
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**Divine Word Missionaries  
among the San:  
*No Quick Remedies***

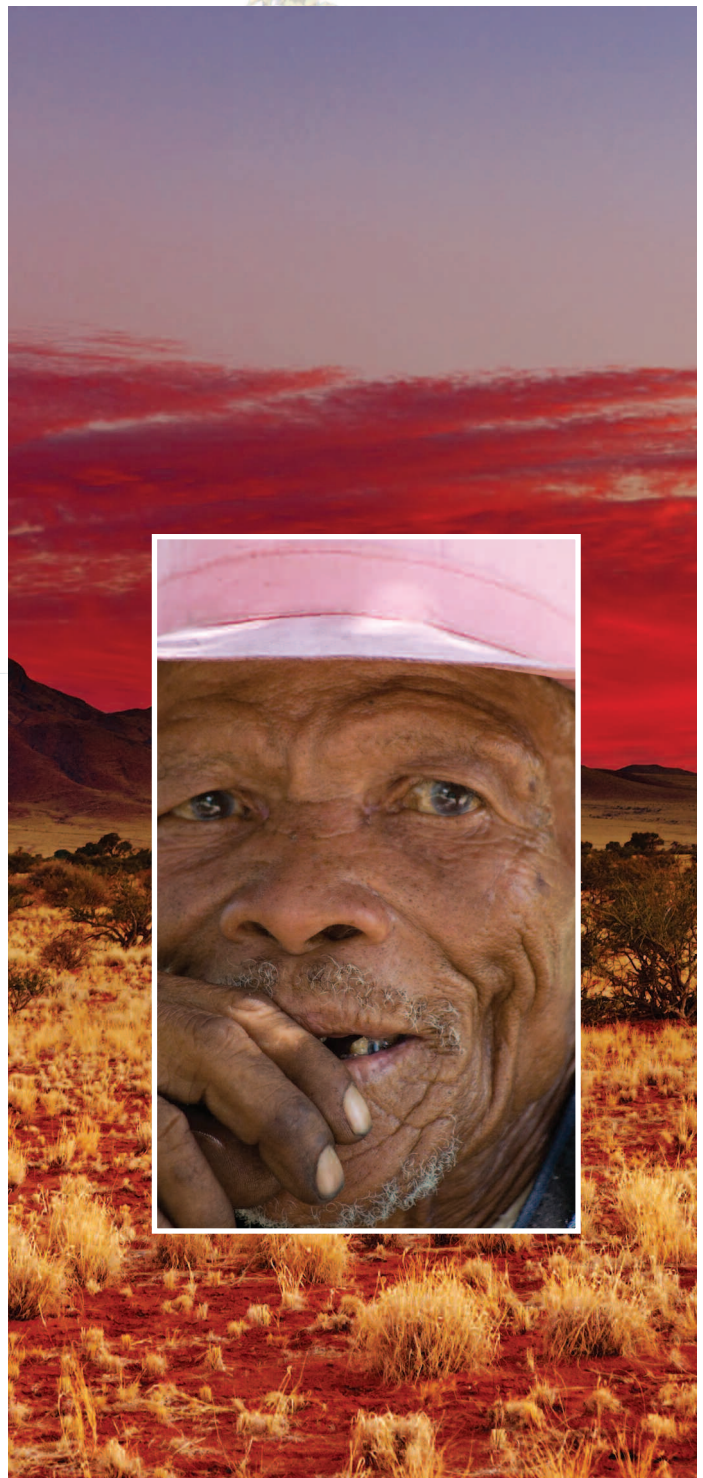
*Marek Marciniak SVD*

The indigenous people of the Kalahari Desert live in areas of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Angola, and Zimbabwe. Their total population is estimated to be about 100,000, with 50,000 living in Botswana. The group has been labeled with many names, some of which have pejorative connotations. Perhaps the most neutral term is *San*, which was used extensively by Western anthropologists and remains common in academic circles.

The San were traditionally hunter-gatherers and there is some genetic evidence which suggests they are one of the oldest peoples of the world.

Over the course of many centuries, the San were driven from their original land by other populations. During modern times, the San are found most often living in small family bands as hunters and gatherers in the dry, harsh Kalahari region. Unfortunately, modern times have also brought the San discrimination, oppression, and dispossession. Today, the San have lost most of their rights to ancestral territories and have been forced into a sedentary lifestyle.

Because the San did not choose to settle down and were not prepared for this kind of lifestyle which differs so greatly from their traditions and customs, they have experienced many social problems, including tension within the community, alcoholism,





crime, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS. They have also lost their sense of identity, cultural adhesion, and self-respect. They are one of the most marginalized, impoverished, and vulnerable groups in Africa.

A recent survey shows that over thirty-five percent of San workers in the age group from seven to twenty years in the Ghanzi District have never attended school. Access to education remains one of the major needs of the San.

Few young San are prepared to exercise leadership in the community. Since most of the population has always lived in small, scattered, and independent groups, leadership skills were never well developed. Again, education will be a critical need for the San.

Divine Word Missionaries who minister to the San find the work to be very challenging. The problems which the San experience have developed over many decades, so there will be no quick success. What is needed, and what Divine Word Missionaries hope to provide, is faithfulness, patience, and a loving commitment. ♦



# Not So Common Seminary

*Carlos Vieira Lima SVD*



Our seminary is called the “Common Formation Centre” because it serves all the Divine Word Missionary provinces in Africa where English is the common language. I must admit that it is not a very attractive name, and some of the things we do here are certainly not common. For example, our seminary community, just outside the capital city of Nairobi, Kenya, is home to our sixteen seminarians, three priests, one Brother, and seven cows.

We began raising dairy cows in order to become more self-reliant and to reduce the financial subsidy which our Generalate in Rome needs to send us each year. So, besides learning theology, doing ministry, and taking care of the house, we have also learned much about the dairy business. Depending on the time of year and whether we are in drought, each of our cows can produce about twenty-five liters of milk each day. We use a small amount of the milk in our own house and the rest we are able to sell.

**...our seminary community is home to sixteen seminarians, three priests, one Brother, and seven cows.**



Our little project has been quite successful, but now our cows are getting a bit old. If we “trade in” an old cow for \$700, we need to have an additional \$1,300 to get a younger one. I suppose this is not a very common problem in most seminaries. ♦





**Bishop A. A. Sebastin Durairaj SVD** was born in Thirunagar in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He entered the seminary in 1971 and professed first vows in 1979. After completing his theological studies, he was ordained a priest in 1985. He was assigned to pastoral work and seminary formation after ordination. In 1996, Father Durairaj was appointed rector of Divine Word Seminary in Bhopal. In 2005, he was elected provincial superior of the Central Indian Province of Divine Word Missionaries. On May 11, 2009, Pope Benedict appointed him bishop of the Diocese of Khandwa in the state of Madhya Pradesh, India.

Bp. Durairaj holds a master's degree in counseling from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois, and a doctoral degree in counseling education from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Last summer, Bp. Durairaj visited Techny and described the wonderful work being done with street kids and disadvantaged children in his diocese by Sister Ambika and the Sisters of Our Lady of the Garden.

Sister Ambika Thudalyputhenveedu OLG belongs to the Sisters of Our Lady of the Garden, an international community of religious sisters. Originally from the Indian state of Kerala, Sr. Ambika professed her first vows in 2003.

The Sisters of Our Lady of the Garden went to work in the Diocese of Indore, India, at the request of Bishop George Anathil SVD. Later, the sisters accepted an invitation to work in the Diocese of Khandwa. Today, more than seventy sisters serve in eight communities in India. The sisters help the needy through schools, social services, and mission parishes.



**Navjeevan Children's Home is located in the Khandwa District of the state of Madhya Pradesh. This state has the largest population of the indigenous people of India, known as "tribals." They suffer extremely high poverty rates, and most live in remote, rural areas. The Khandwa District lags behind other parts of the state on most indicators of human and social development. About eighty percent of the people in Madhya Pradesh depend upon agriculture. The main crops are maize, soybeans, and wheat. Since agricultural work is seasonal and few are able to own their own land, during much of the year there are few opportunities for work. This is another reason children flee to the cities.**

# No Weeds in the Sisters' Garden

*Dennis Newton SVD*

One might imagine the Sisters of Our Lady of the Garden serenely working in a small, tidy flower bed or harvesting fresh vegetables against a lush backdrop of dewy foliage. That would be a very nice image. Instead, picture Sr. Ambika and her companion sisters entering a dimly lit, soot-covered railway station to seek out children who are barely surviving city life by begging, selling cigarettes, rag-picking, and petty crimes. Passersby might scorn these kids as society's weeds, but to Sr. Ambika they are beautiful flowers in God's urban garden.

The Sisters of Our Lady of the Garden began the Navjeevan (a word meaning "to give new life") Health Center in 1980. This facility served as a medical clinic for the poor. In 2003, two sisters started to visit the railway station and bus terminal. They were shocked to find many children who had been abandoned by their parents or who had run away from their homes. These street kids engaged in various legal and illegal activities just to survive. Slowly, the sisters established a rapport with the children by showing them love. The sisters also reached out to the local police, civil authorities, and railroad officials to guarantee



**“Become all things to all people with a charity that knows neither fatigue nor limits.”**



that they had access to all areas of the terminal and some protection while they were visiting these dangerous places.

Many of the children were addicted to drugs or alcohol, and almost all of them were malnourished and sick. Some were exploited for prostitution. No local social service agency looked out for these children. In July 2003, the sisters decided to convert the health center into Navjeevan Children's Home.

The sisters established a formal day care program to assist the street children and a residential program. The program of comprehensive care for children ages five to fourteen has multiple components: nutrition, education, health care, recreation, vocational training, and values/spiritual formation. Whenever possible, the sisters attempt to place the children back with their families, if they have the assurance that the family circumstances have been resolved and the children will be well cared for. Unfortunately, some children cannot resist the lure of the streets and leave the program, causing Sr. Ambika and the other sisters great pain. The sisters find encouragement in the words of their founder, Saint Anthony Gianelli, an Italian bishop, "Become all things to all people with a charity that knows neither fatigue nor limits."



Volunteers tutor the children so they can be reintegrated into the educational system. Older children who are unwilling or incapable of entering the educational mainstream are provided with vocational training in tailoring, computers, and various crafts. A medical doctor assesses each child who enters the program and the doctor visits the home each week. The sisters sponsor wholesome activities and celebrate religious and national holidays with the children, giving them a sense of normalcy and stability.

Abieeth is just one of the youngsters the sisters encountered. The sisters found seven-year-old Abieeth at the rail station where he had fled a father who beat him and forced him into begging. Abieeth found a loving home at Navjeevan. Within a short time, he was excelling at school and he earned a spot in an excellent Catholic school. Now fourteen years old, Abieeth thinks he wants to become a policeman.



Sr. Ambika says that Bishop Durairaj seldom misses an opportunity to visit Navjeevan, to encourage the sisters and let the children know that they are loved. Indeed, the vision statement of the Diocese of Khandwa proclaims that they are making the world a visible sign of God's love. Navjeevan is certainly a clear sign of God's love. ♦

## Navjeevan "to give new life"

*Father Joseph Pais SVD reports on the ministry at Vikas Deepti in the Indian state of Orissa.*

*[ed.]*



## Looking Back, Looking Forward

*Joseph Pais SVD*

*"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the benefactors of Divine Word Missionaries for their love and their support."*

**Naya Nayak is eleven years old. When he was about four years old, he began to experience weakness,**



**first only on one side of his body. Gradually, however, the condition attacked his entire body and also affected his hearing. Naya's mother brought him to Vikas Deepti in 2007 and he has been receiving therapy and training. Naya's mother received a modest loan through one of Vikas Deepti's self-help programs and now runs a small poultry operation to help her meet family expenses.**

Each year on August 22, the community at Vikas Deepti celebrates the birthday of our founder and director, Father John Maliekal SVD. Fr. John is an inspiration to all of us, the staff and patients of our "Home for the Physically Handicapped." His untiring service and boundless energy have benefited hundreds of disabled children and persons living with leprosy. I am sure that every year on his birthday, Fr. John looks back at the previous year and thanks God for the many blessings bestowed on Vikas Deepti.



One of the main functions of Vikas Deepti is to provide orthotic and prosthetic devices to children with physical disabilities. Two full-time technicians operate the orthotic and prosthetic workshop. A third person is currently being trained in Bangalore. The physical therapy unit is also staffed by professionals who treat our residents and children from throughout the region. Some of the children need surgery to correct their conditions, and Vikas Deepti is able to arrange that. Last year, 450 children were treated at Vikas Deepti.

The staff of Vikas Deepti sponsors health clinics for families. These clinics raise awareness of personal health care, immunization, the causes of disabilities, and prenatal, natal, and postnatal care. Last year, 197 persons attended the clinics. In other education sessions, parents, guardians, or family members receive training and follow-up support so they can give regular physiotherapy to children at home. The children receiving this care experience improved mobility.



Vikas Deepti provides courses in vocational training for young persons with disabilities. In the past three years, 298 youths completed vocational training courses and have secured employment in their local villages. At present, forty-five new students are enrolled in courses for tailoring, broom making, computers, and electronics.

We rely on help from friends and benefactors to support Vikas Deepti, but we do as much as we can to be self-reliant. The Mission Center of Divine Word Missionaries at Techny, Illinois, has helped Vikas Deepti tremendously, especially through Divine Word Farms in Iowa. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the benefactors of Divine Word Missionaries for their love and their support. ♦





## Doing What We Can: One Parish Responds to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

*Jean Chrysostome Kiyala SVD*

*Fr. Jean Chrysostome Kiyala SVD is pastor of St. Benedict Catholic Church in Malamulele, South Africa. The country has been devastated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Estimates suggest that 5.7 million people (eighteen percent of the adult population) are living with HIV/AIDS. The life expectancy of a child born today is only forty-nine years, compared to seventy-eight years in the United States. [ed.]*



As a missionary, a pastor, and just a human being, I wish I could help every child in South Africa who has lost parents from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I wish our poor parish could take in, educate, clothe, and feed every child we encounter in our community. I know we cannot, and it breaks my heart. But we are doing what we can.

We have identified 357 children in our parish whom we describe as orphans and vulnerable children. All of the children have lost their parents from HIV/AIDS. Most of them are now living with grandparents or other relatives, but thirty-six of them are living in “child-headed” families, meaning a non-adult sibling is raising them.



Two years ago we tried to build a residence for the children who were in child-headed families and for the children who were in abusive or unhealthy situations, but our grant request for land was denied. What we can do, however, is provide a day program, an after-school program, and family visitations to provide support, services and, if necessary, intervention.

In many cases, our contact with the children and families can result in additional services through other agencies. For example, the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference has a program to provide some building materials (e.g. cement, windows, glass, and doors) to households run by

children or elderly relatives who are caring for orphaned children. Some limited government assistance is also available.

Our day care and after-school programs provide counseling to help children deal with the traumatizing losses they have experienced. Parishioners provide tutoring for students who have fallen behind in school and we provide a nutritious meal. We can also help children get school uniforms.

One of our parishioners, Mrs. Agnes Mashila, visits the homes of persons who are living with HIV/AIDS. She assists them with their medica-



tions, reports side effects to the local clinic, and looks in on the children who are living in the household.

A team of ten volunteer caregivers does home visits to encourage the children to attend school. The volunteers will help family members fill out paperwork for assistance. These ambassadors of St. Benedict Parish assure everyone they meet that someone cares.

All of us wish we could do more for the hundreds of children who have been robbed of their childhood. We continue to fight the good fight, doing what we can. ♦







## Restoring Beauty, Restoring Hope

*Dennis Newton SVD*



Father German Mehler SVD devotes much time and energy to arranging plastic surgeries. No, he is not ministering in Hollywood; in fact, he is working in a very poor area of Mindoro, Philippines.

He was born and raised in Germany. After his ordination, he was assigned to the Philippines. Fr. Mehler has served as a pastor in a number of remote areas of the Philippines and has undertaken a special medical ministry in addition to his regular duties as pastor. His current assignment is pastor of Conception Parish on the tiny island of Sibale in Romblon. The parish encompasses the entire island, which has a population of approximately 4,500. Most of the people live in poverty.

For over forty years, Fr. Mehler has arranged restorative surgery for children with cleft lips and cleft palates. Babies born with a cleft lip have an opening in the upper lip between the mouth and nose. A cleft palate is created when the roof of the mouth has a hole in it. The defect is routinely corrected by surgery when an infant is around three months old. In developing countries, especially in poor areas, cleft repair is not usually available because of the cost. The psychological and social impact on children with clefts can be dramatic.

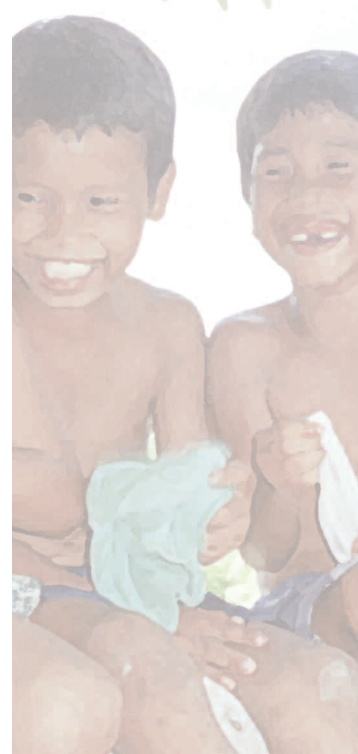




Fr. Mehler traces his ministry to an American Divine Word missionary, Fr. Raymond Kolk SVD. While assigned to the University of San Carlos in the Philippines, Fr. Kolk began a medical program for children with birth defects and other medical conditions.

When Fr. Mehler began his program, the children were transported to a regional hospital in Calapan, but the hospital there had problems, including frequent electrical brown-outs which interrupted surgeries. Fr. Mehler then began sending the children to the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. The head of surgery, Dr. Angel Agbulos, was already helping children with cleft lips from other poor areas of the Philippines.

Only indigent children are eligible for the program. Ideally, the children are selected when they are about one year old, although cleft lips can be repaired into adulthood.





Ordinarily, Fr. Mehler arranges transportation to Manila on a Monday. The children are checked in at the hospital and they receive an examination by a pediatrician. The surgeries begin on Tuesday morning, and the team can usually accomplish ten surgeries. Children remain at the hospital on Wednesday for recovery then return home on Thursday.

Fr. Mehler recounts the story of meeting a fifteen-year-old boy with a cleft lip in Santa Cruz. He was working at an ice house, pulling ice blocks. When Fr. Mehler explained to him that his cleft lip could be repaired, he could scarcely believe it. In fact, he was so sure that nothing could be done that he did not show up for his appointment. Fr. Mehler went to boy's home and personally brought him to the hospital. The boy, a talented artist, created a beautiful charcoal portrait of Fr. Mehler to show his appreciation.

Over 4,000 children have been helped through Fr. Mehler's efforts. When Dr. Agbulos, the first doctor, retired, other doctors, including Dr. Melvin Sibulo and Dr. Fe Yabot, stepped forward. Because of the generosity of the hospital, doctors, and staff, the total cost for the surgery, medicines, and hospital stay is held below \$250.

The children and their families are joyful and relieved at the transformation resulting from surgery. Without this life-changing surgery, the children could become disadvantaged outcasts. Because of it, they can grow up and be productive members of society. ♦



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# Flags



1

2

In this issue, we have articles by Fr. Marek from Poland, Fr. Jean from the Republic of the Congo, Fr. Joseph from India, and Fr. Carlos from Brazil.

Can you identify which flag belongs to each country?



3



4

Answers on back inside cover.



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# SUNSET ON THE PLAIN

*Richard Daschbach SVD*



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There is an activity on the plain as the sun goes down and afternoon moves briskly into evening. The spring, deserted during the heart of the day, is now the terminus of a stately procession of water vessels balanced on women's heads, women clothed in plain cloth of homegrown and homespun cotton. The dark blue cloth flows in unbroken rhythm with the women's measured step as they file along the worn path with much talking. Older boys are running out to pasture to bring in livestock and secure them for the night.

A group passes by, their baggage partly loaded on their horses, partly slung over the men's shoulders or balanced on their wives' heads. They do not stop as they bid the time of day, for they hope to make their village by nightfall.

Already sunset shadows are chasing weakening light up slopes that are flushed with auburn and soon will be shaded with evening. Today is leaving fast and tomorrow is hard upon its heels.

A black cow plods stupidly by, tethered to a wisp of a boy and dragging the ages along with it. Two other lissome sprites, friends of the first no doubt, prod the heavy-footed beast from behind. It clomps past, horn, hide, and tail, a study in idiocy. They are leading it to water.

Old Sane, well imbibed, is wobbling down the path from Kluanek again, a path that will not stay straight for him. His face is flushed into a perpetual grin below two bright eyes blank with mirth. His fringed shawl flaps in syncopation with his gait. An occasional whoop rings far and wide but otherwise does not disturb the equanimity of the plain.

The last woman is climbing the bank from the spring. She adjusts the cloth head-ring that will cushion her water vessel, stoops and lifts the clay vessel to her head, positions it into balance, then straightens up and moves away toward the houses.

The spring is empty, and so are the fields. The profound mountains scrutinize the fading plain laid out before them, and the flutter of bats cuts across the dull red west. Soon stars are twinkling brilliantly in the deep clear of late evening that is almost, but not yet, night. ♦

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## Charitable Gift Annuities: What They Are and How They Work

BY FRANK MINTON

Mildred K admired good writing and could turn a phrase herself. That is why she dreamed of providing fellowships to students in the creative writing program at the local university. However, she needed all of her investment income for living expenses. Indeed, if she were to remain in her condominium she would soon require more income to pay for domestic help. Her largest single asset was some 30,000 shares of stock in a financial services company. Even though the stock had recently declined in value, it still had appreciated significantly since she inherited it many years earlier. Its current value was approximately \$600,000. Her dependents, though, were only about \$140,000 each. After talking to a representative of the SVD, Mildred consulted her legal advisor and decided to purchase a charitable gift annuity with the stock. The annuity was purchased for \$140,000 and she had been receiving \$14,000 per year since the first payment.

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# MEET THE AUTHORS

**Marek Marciniak SVD** was born in Mosina, Poland. Father Marciniak professed first vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 1982 and was ordained a priest in 1989. He is pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Mission in Kasane, Botswana, and he serves as vice-provincial of the Botswana Province.

**Jean Chrysostome Kiyala SVD** was born in Kenge, Republic of the Congo. Father Kiyala professed perpetual vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 1999 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2000. He is currently pastor of St. Benedict Catholic Church in Malamulele, Botswana.

**Joseph Pais SVD** is from the Indian state of Mangalore. Father Pais professed first vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 1988 and was ordained in 1993. He is currently president of Vikas Deepti, a home for physically disabled children in the Indian state of Orissa.

**Carlos Vieira Lima SVD** was born in Victoria da Con, Brazil. Father Vieira Lima professed first vows in 1991 and was ordained in 1998. He is currently rector of the Common Formation Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, and vice-provincial of the Divine Word Kenya Province.

**Richard Daschbach SVD** is originally from Pittsburgh. Father Richard entered Divine Word Missionaries in 1954, professed his first vows in 1956, and was ordained in 1964. Fr. Richard founded the children's home in East Timor and continues to shepherd it.

Divine Word Missionaries Mission Center  
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The Society of the Divine Word is an international Catholic missionary congregation with nearly 7,000 members from 70 countries. They work in over 70 different lands on all the continents except Antarctica.

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DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES, Vol. LIII No. 4 Winter 2010  
issued quarterly

Divine Word Missionaries, Mission Center, Techny, Illinois 60082  
Subscription \$20.00 a year

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