

Interviewee	Interviewer	Monastery	Date of interview	Keywords
Sister Basildis (1922 -2004)	Brother Frans van der Berg	Ursulines of the Roman Union	July 8, 1980	Deaf education; Kenya; Magale; Mary Legion; Misikhu; Mumias; Uganda

Sister Basildis belonged to the Ursulines of the Roman Union Monastery. Her mission in Kenya and Kakamega lasted from 1967-1968 and a second period in Kenya from 1972-1980. On her missions, she was a caregiver and teacher, worked in dioceses and participated in the Legion of Mary (Legio Maria). During her second mission in Kenya, she worked on a deaf school.

Audio 1

- Discussed her youth and how and why she became a member of the Ursulines of the Roman Union in Bergen.
- Discussed her mission work in Uganda and how she came back to Kenya because she needed to escape Uganda (politics). There she worked with blind children.
- The hearing aids on the deaf institute in Kenya were maintained by a Chinese technician who had to escape from Uganda as well, they were very lucky to have him involved. He repaired them when they didn't work properly.

Sister Gertrude (also from belonging to the Ursulines of Bergen) and two African Sisters went to the UK¹ to learn how to set up an institute for the deaf and how to teach deaf children. I (Sister Basildis) took care of these children in the boarding school. Boys and girls grew up there together. She used signs to communicate with the children. Accompanied by deaf children, she maintained the house of Father Zwart. We had a large group in the boarding school. They had a bakery and now (1980) they have a farm with chickens and eggs. Currently (1980), the primary school is led by an African Sister and a secondary school is led by sister Lutgard(?). This is a school for girls where we teach them sewing, typing and work on a farm. They get a diploma when finished. At least ten deaf girls are working in our hospital. Some girls work in an office to type, some of them find a job in Nairobi or in housekeeping in houses of rich people.

Q: Was the communication in English or in a domestically language?

A: Well...they had to learn English. They learn English in school not as a language in the home. But we, in housekeeping, used signs not words because they had to learn them in school first.

A: We chose to teach them in English because the children came from the whole country and domestically languages differ a lot. We decided to offer everything in 1 language: English

Q: Were the children able to speak?

A: Yeah

Q: How did you notice?

A: We had a deaf girl who made tremendous progress. She has a really good job now in an institute with Sisters. She even went to Germany to show off her progress. Another deaf girl works in a hospital. She's a great girl and she talks!

¹ According to José Eijt the Sisters went to Dublin to follow a one year training at the Dominicanese who were specialised in deaf education. *Zorgen in Gods Naam*, 325.

Q: *But only in English?*

A: Yes, only English but that's a universal language

Q: *You also used English? They could read your lips, isn't it?*

A: Yes. I also taught sewing class. These children were so diligent, not distracted and worked properly. I really enjoyed to work with them

Our aim was to Africanize the institute: more native sisters and teachers had to take over the school and other work. People were happy to have us but the influence of the European Sisters needed to be pushed back. Trouble (her words) between European and African teachers arose (Basildis wasn't a professional teacher) which made it hard to stay. The ambiance changed and I went home. An African Sister took over my duties.

Audio 2

- Discussion about her time in Kenya in general. E.g. communication and interacting with native Sisters and the Bishop.
 - o Generally, they were very conservative
- Visit of the Pope ("He was a really nice person")
- Legion of Mary (Legio Maria)
 - o Became a bit sect-ish (she shared a hearsay experience)
- The rise of Charismatic Movement²
 - o Probably influence of the US

Audio 3

She shared her vision about the future of Kenya and the influence of missionary Brothers, Sisters and Priests. She expects that Catholicism will spread amongst the residents of the country.

² Charismatic Movement: The charismatic movement is the international trend of historically mainstream Christian congregations adopting beliefs and practices similar to Pentecostalism. Fundamental to the movement is the use of spiritual gifts. Among mainline Protestants, the movement began around 1960. (Wikipedia, June 2020)