

**The Beginning of Church of God Missions in Kenya
and the Early Missionaries who Served at Ingotse Mission**

Albert Weir Baker was an attorney and member of his father's law firm in Johannesburg, South Africa. Having prosecuted and defended many men who worked in the gold mines in the area, he was convinced that more should be done to remedy the root of the problem of crime, not just deal with the end results. In 1896, he decided to start a missionary effort to tell the workers about the life-changing salvation available through faith in Jesus Christ. The organization he founded to evangelize the Zulus, the South African tribesmen and laborers, was called "South African Compound Mission.



A.W. Baker with African children

One of the missionaries who was associated with Mr. Baker's mission in South Africa, was Mr. Robert Wilson. After reading "Hearing and Doing", a magazine published by the Africa Inland Mission describing the pioneer work in British East Africa and the great spiritual destitution of the local people, Mr. Wilson and his wife felt called to go there as missionaries.



After earnest prayer for guidance, Mr. Baker agreed to pay Mr. Wilson's expenses to travel to East Africa to see the land and ascertain the needs of the people. On November 17, 1904, a train took Mr. Wilson from Johannesburg to Lourenço Marques (now Maputo, Mozambique), where he boarded a steam ship bound for Mombasa, Kenya, arriving there on November 29. The next day, he rode the train to Kijabe, Kenya, west of Nairobi, where he met with Rev. C. S. Hurlburt, the founder and director of Africa Inland Mission. After two days, Mr. Wilson went by rail to Kisumu, the end of the rail road on the northeast shore of Lake Victoria.

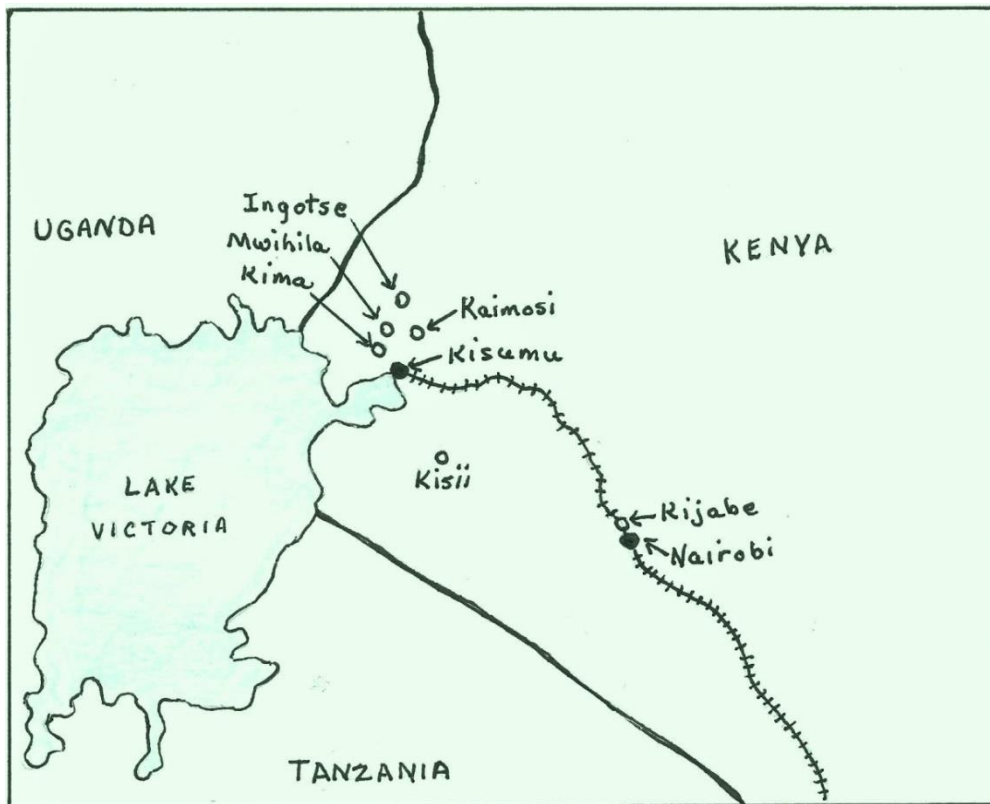
Above: Mr. Robert Wilson's journey from Johannesburg, South Africa to Kisumu, British East Africa

The next day, Mr. Wilson set out on foot to walk the thirty miles to Kaimosi, the headquarters of the Friends Industrial Mission which was about three years old at that time. The Friends were pleased about the possibility of a new missionary coming to serve among the Nyanza people, and offered their mission as a base from which he could work until he got established. He returned to Kijabe, where Rev. Hurlburt took him on a tour of the area and tried to interest him in working with the Kikuyu people there.

Upon his return to South Africa, workers at the mission conference enthusiastically agreed that Mr. & Mrs. Wilson should go to East Africa. The name was changed to "South African Compound and Interior Mission", to include the proposed new mission station in East Africa.

Preparations were made, and in a few months, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson and their two sons, Harland and Robert, traveled from South Africa to East Africa. Because the rail road ended at Kisumu, they had to go the rest of the way to Kaimosi on foot. Mrs. Wilson, who was pregnant, was transported in a carrying chair by four porters. The government advised that the missionaries leave Kaimosi temporarily because of unrest in the adjacent Nandi territory, so the Wilsons moved to Maragoli, a Church Missionary Society station where Mr. Willis was in charge. Soon

Mr. Willis and Mr. Wilson undertook a walking tour to explore the Bunyore area. On the way back, Mr. Wilson met Chief Otieno, who expressed a desire to have a mission station on his tribal land.



On August 15, 1905, the Wilsons, with the help of some African porters carrying the tent and their supply of food, moved to Bunyore, which was later known as Kima. Their first task was to build shelters out of poles and grass, and the next year they built a more permanent residence with the help of two South African men, Bertson and Anderson.

Two years later, John Bila, an African Christian from South Africa came to help with the work of evangelization, and then Mr. and Mrs. Richardson joined the Wilsons at Kima. Mr. Wilson suffered a sun stroke and had to return to South Africa. The Richardsons carried on until Henry



C. and Gertrude Kramer, former Friends missionaries, came to stay while they went on furlough. Mrs. Kramer translated the first gospels of Mark and John into the local language. Later the rest of the New Testament and Psalms was completed and published by the American Bible Society and received with great excitement by the people. In 1914 while the Kramers were at Kima, Mr. A. W. Baker and his daughter, Mabel, visited the mission, and Mabel remained to serve as a missionary and translator at Kima for the next 38 years. When the Kramers went on furlough, Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Keller took charge of the mission.

About this time, Mr. Baker in South Africa, felt that he could no longer sponsor the additional mission in East Africa. He asked the Kramers, while they were on furlough, to look for a church group in America that would be willing to assume the responsibility of the mission in Kenya. Mr. Baker required that the organization 1.) should not stress “the speaking of tongues”, 2.) should teach the Bible as the Word of God, and 3.) should teach the unity of God’s people.

During their furlough in 1921, while the Kramers were visiting sponsors in Pomona, California, they met two brothers, Abram and William Bixler, of the Church of God. Already familiar with the Gospel Trumpet magazine, and impressed by the witness of the Bixlers, the Kramers embraced the truth of the teachings of the Church of God. When Mr. Kramer told about the offer made by A. W. Baker to obtain a new sponsor for the East African mission, William Bixler suggested that the Missionary Board of the Church of God should consider taking advantage of this opportunity. The Pomona congregation paid the train fare so that Henry and Gertrude Kramer could be in Anderson, Indiana to meet with the Missionary Board at the camp meeting in June. For the past eight years, Mr. Kramer had been in charge of the mission in British East Africa owned by Mr. A. W. Baker of the South African Compound and Interior Mission. He was able to give a detailed description of the mission and the work of evangelization and education being carried on there.

Several years before, in 1912, the Missionary Board had directed Samuel Joiner to go to Africa to find a location for a mission station. This plan was delayed by World War I, so it was not until 1921 when the Kramers brought news of Mr. Baker’s offer, that the trip was finally undertaken. That summer, after a tour of the Holy Land, Samuel Joiner boarded a ship in Egypt bound for Mombasa, and went on to Nairobi by train, where he met Bro. William J. Bailey.



Earlier in 1920, W. J. Bailey had submitted his application to the Missionary Board. He had a strong conviction that God was calling him to be a missionary in Africa. He felt that God had especially provided the money for him to go and had relieved him from all temporal and financial responsibilities, so that he could go. He said, “How can I answer God if I do not go?” Although they respected his fine, submissive spirit, he was not appointed as a Church of God missionary. They assured him of their Christian love and fellowship, and let him go on his own responsibility.

William J. Bailey

Apparently William J. Bailey, with his wife, Lilly, and their family had gone to Africa soon thereafter, and in 1921 when Samuel Joiner arrived, they were living at Kijabe, the Africa Inland Mission station 25 miles west of Nairobi. After spending a few days at Kijabe with the Bailey family and going on a hunting safari, Mr. Joiner, accompanied by Mr. Bailey, took the train to Kisumu on the northeast shore of Lake Victoria. Early on October 27, 1921, they set out with

four porters for the twenty-three mile walk to Bunyore and the Kima mission station. They arrived about sundown, tired and hungry, and met Mr. and Mrs. Keller, who were in charge at the time.

The men found that the mission property, held on a ninety-nine year lease, consisted of thirty acres with several buildings, including two residences, stone and brick school classrooms and dormitories with grass roofs, a stone 20' x 60' chapel, and various other temporary buildings. Being favorably impressed after inspecting the mission, Mr. Joiner and Mr. Bailey left Kisumu on November 14 to travel to Johannesburg, South Africa to meet personally with Mr. Baker. They were welcomed warmly by Mr. Baker, and visited until late in the evening discussing the transfer of the mission and the Church of God theology. The next morning, Mr. Baker signed the legal documents of transfer, in the name of the Lord, to the Church of God Missionary Board – free of charge.

Samuel Joiner wrote, "We were now ready to start for our homes, Mr. Bailey for Kijabe, and I for Anderson, Indiana, by way of Cape Town and South Hampton, England. When I mentioned South Hampton, Mr. Baker asked if we had the time to listen to an experience he had had at that seaport in England. We assured him we were most happy to listen.

"In April of 1912," Mr. Baker began, "I booked passage to New York on the maiden voyage of the S. S. Titanic. The cabin steward had taken my luggage to the state room. I was about to enter when suddenly the Lord said to me, 'This ship will never reach America.' At once I ordered my baggage be taken back to the customs office. When I told the officer what had happened, he replied, 'This ship is unsinkable.'

"I went ashore and changed my booking to another ship due to sail three days later. On the day this ship set sail, word came that the Titanic had struck an iceberg and was sinking." Saying good-bye, Mr. Baker remarked, "The Lord still leads me."

Henry and Gertrude Kramer returned to Kima after their furlough and resumed their work among the Bunyore people. Mrs. Kramer was a talented teacher, having created a system of writing the local language and was producing school books. The Kramers endured many hardships including the death of two of their children. In her bereavement, Mrs. Kramer translated several hymns into the local dialect, which also comforted the African people in their difficult times. In 1923 Mr. Kramer laid the foundation for the big church on the mission. The work at Kima was expanding, and over the next several years the Samuel Joiners, John and Twyla Ludwig and many other dedicated missionaries would come to join the staff as they endeavored to meet the needs of the people living in the surrounding villages.

In addition to the evangelistic work at Kima, the missionaries were heavily involved in education. They started holding classes for boys and girls in separate schools, and taught sewing to women. They trained evangelists and teachers. Schools were also started in outlying villages directed and maintained by the African church. They cared for the sick who came for help.

James T. Murray, a young man of Scotch – English parentage, came to Kenya Colony in 1920, with the first pioneer members of the Salvation Army. He served in Nairobi with the rank of captain. He came in contact with a Church of God missionary in Mombasa, and later visited the Kima mission where he met Ruth Fisher. In 1925, the couple recited their marriage vows in the



James Murray

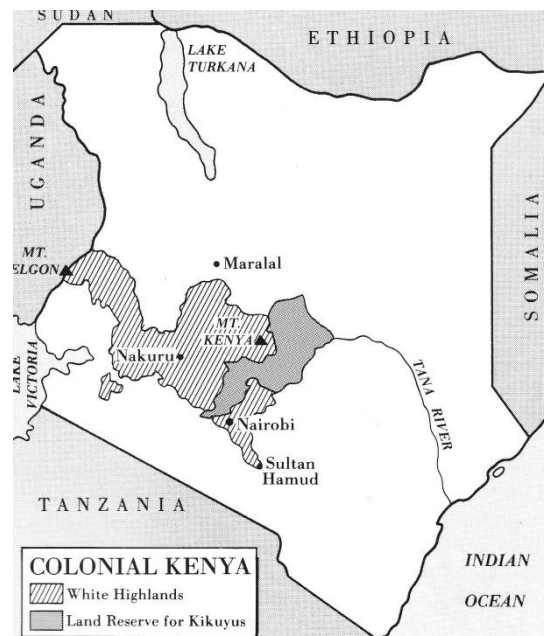
presence of Henry Kramer. Having found that he agreed with the theology of the unity of believers taught by the Church of God, James left the Salvation Army and joined the missionary efforts in Bunyore. The Murrays were gifted teachers, and with the help of Mabel Baker, they started the Boys' School at Kima, and both taught there. Ruth became a master printer, using a foot-operated hand printing press, to produce lessons and books for the school and Sunday School materials.



Ruth & James Murray

In 1921, while the Kellers were still at Kima, Mr. O. C. Keller traveled north about 40 miles to begin a work among the Butso tribe. The local chief, wanting to have a mission in his area, had donated ten acres of land. Mr. Keller built a temporary chapel and started construction of a small house in 1922, in order to maintain the Church of God presence there and prevent the Catholics from gaining a foothold.

By 1915, the African wilderness was being transformed into a British Colony. Asian traders were setting up *dukas* (small shops) and children were attending mission schools and learning to read the Bible in their local dialect and then in English. More settlers were arriving, and the colonial government was under pressure from them to set aside the most fertile areas for farms operated by Europeans. These areas were called the White Highlands. Africans were told that they did not actually own the land, and were not allowed access unless they could show a pass proving that they were employed there. Settlers could lease large farms for 99 years, plant tea and coffee, fence huge ranches and build estates.



Apparently, when William Bailey arrived in British East Africa in 1920, he was able to lease a 5000 acre farm, possibly somewhere around Kijabe. The lease agreement stipulated that he would have the option to buy the land in five years if he cleared 100 acres and would pay 300 pounds sterling every March, or 1700 pounds a year for ten years. In January of 1922, Mr. Bailey sent a proposal to the Missionary Board, suggesting that he could use this farm for training some African workers, and the profits derived from crops that were raised would be sufficient to support missionaries and the endeavors of the mission station in western Kenya. The Missionary Board did not vote to approve this project.

It is unclear how long William tried to make the leased farm productive. At some point he abandoned that project and began working with the Church of God mission at Kima. It was decided that a resident missionary was needed at the north station, now called Ingotse, to stabilize the work there, so William and Lilly Bailey accepted that assignment. The Missionary Board gave them some support without the official status of missionaries. The Baileys moved to Ingotse in June of 1924.

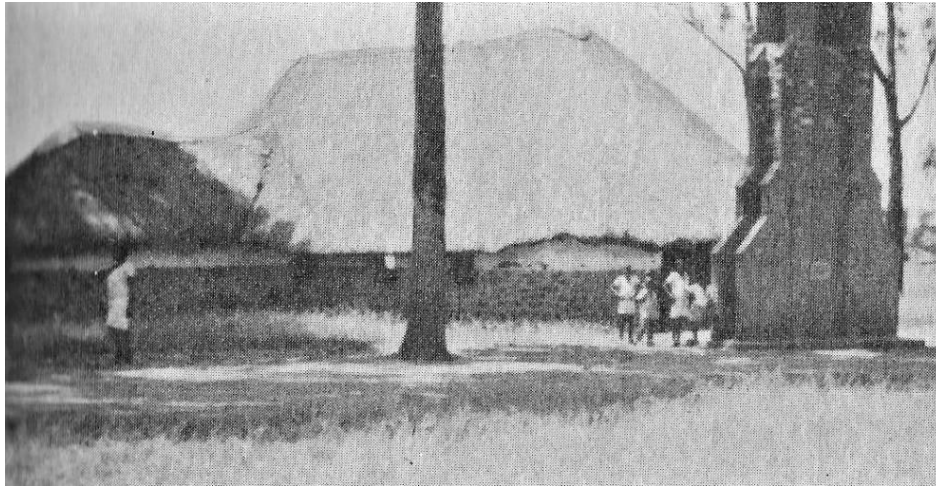


The Bailey Family

The Baileys had seven children, so they built a large house at Ingotse to accommodate the family. The house was a two story building, brick below and frame above, having five rooms on the first floor and six spacious bedrooms on the second floor. There was a large, unfinished attic and a back porch.



William Bailey built the church at Ingotse. Since there were many rocks close at hand, the lower



part of the walls was laid up with stones, and the rest of the walls were made of a framework of poles, filled and plastered with mud, using the traditional style of building, complete with a thatched grass roof.

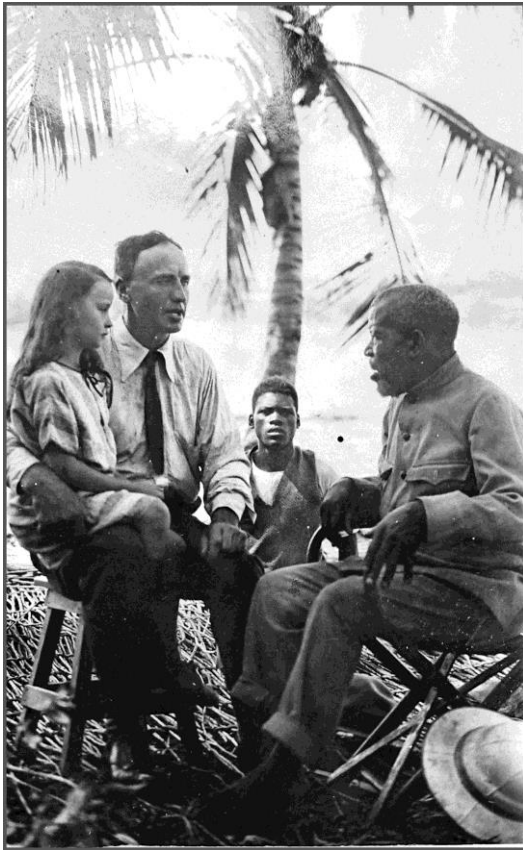
More than twenty years later, the rocks from the original church would be reused in the foundation and new walls of the Murray Memorial Chapel.



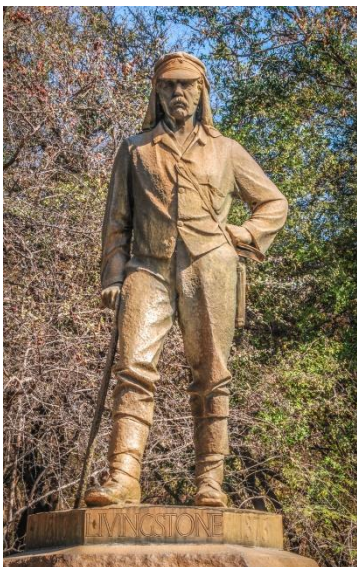
The Baileys started a primary school for the children who lived near the mission and built a three room school in which to conduct classes. Another small building was used by Mrs. Bailey for a lying-in ward to treat sick people. William Bailey made two trips to the Suk people lived 150 miles north of Ingotse. He hoped that the Missionary Board would sponsor a mission to reach that area with the gospel.



In 1927, the Baileys were given permission to go on furlough. When they returned to the field, the next year, they were granted full status as Church of God missionaries by the Missionary Board and were commended for faithfully serving over the last several years.



Of special interest is this photograph of William Bailey, with his young daughter on his lap, interviewing Matthew Wellington in 1934. The accompanying information was written on the back of the photograph.



Statue of David Livingstone at Victoria Falls

Matthew Wellington, whose personal signature appears below, and who is shown in photo, is the only remaining member of the band of natives who accompanied David Livingston in Africa. He was present when Henry M. Stanley found Livingston; was with Livingston at his death, and assisted in carrying the body on its perilous 9-month trip to the coast. Photo received direct from Wellington (with a letter) by Carl J. Tilton, and given to P. G. Smith, Aug 15, 1934. Missionary shown is Rev. W. J. Bailey

Matthew Wellington
Address: Freetown, 117 om-
bassa, British East Africa,
P.O. Box 72.

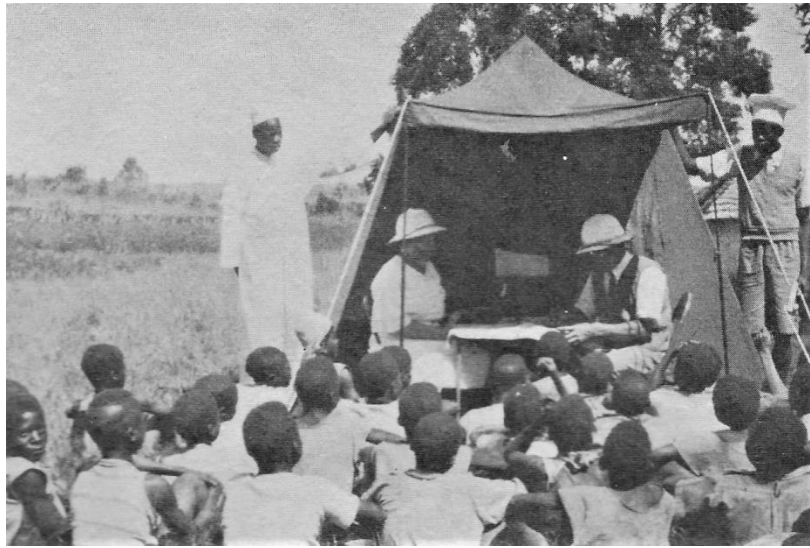


James T. and Ruth Murray—Early African Missionaries



After James Murray and Ruth Fisher were married in 1925, they served together at Kima, teaching in the Boys' School they had helped establish. They also educated the children of the Kima missionary families, the Ludwigs and the Kramers with the Bailey children at Ingotse. Ruth continued running the printing press, turning out a great quantity of literature and school lessons. Ruth was a very talented, creative woman and taught tailoring to the boys in the Boys' School, as well as sewing to the women in the villages. While the Murrays lived at Kima, all three of their infant children died and were buried in the small cemetery on the mission. They persevered until 1932, when it was possible for them to go on furlough. Four months were spent in Scotland where Ruth met and got acquainted with her husband's relatives. They traveled to the United States in January 1933 and spent the time travelling to many churches, speaking about their plans for working at the new station at Kisa, twenty two miles north of Kima. The next year they returned to the field, fully expecting to take over the new mission station in Kisa, otherwise known as Mwhila.

An unexpected change in staffing occurred when William and Lilly Bailey retired, sending the Murrays instead to the north station, Ingotse, in 1934. The villagers living in Butso were less advanced than the people in Bunyore or Kisa. James taught the young boys in the little mission school, while Ruth continued Mrs. Bailey's work of caring for the sick who came to the mission for help. A large part of their time was taken up in evangelistic tours, traveling through the bush to reach people in the widely scattered villages, teaching the people about the Savior, Jesus Christ, and how to live the Christian life. It was on one of these camping trips away from the mission, that Ruth became sick with malaria. She took medicine to treat this sickness, but the water she drank was contaminated and she became very ill with typhoid fever. She died a few weeks later on January 9, 1936, at Kaimosi, and was buried next to the graves of her children at Kima mission.



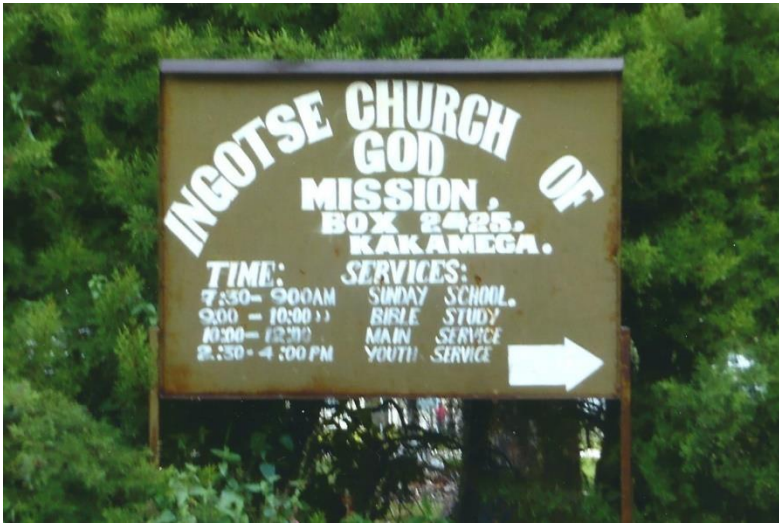
Ruth & James Murray teaching Bible stories to children in the bush country

After his wife's death, James Murray carried on the work at Ingotse alone. He housed, fed and taught twenty boys in the little school on the mission. He cared for the sick, preached in the church and continued with the evangelistic outreach. In 1937, he built the brick bell tower in front of the Ingotse church building, and installed a large bell in it to call the people to church services and the children to school. Near the end of the 1940 school year, James displayed an exhibit from the Ingotse primary school at the annual school show, winning first place. Later that night he became extremely ill with blackwater fever, a pernicious form of malaria. He died on December 6, 1940, and was buried next to his family at the Kima mission. The Missionary Board expressed their grief at his passing, and recognized the many years of faithful and sacrificial service to the Kingdom of God in Kenya Colony of both James and Ruth Murray.



At the beginning of the next year, all of the Church of God missionaries at Kima and Mwihila were fully occupied with their current assignments. No one was free to go to Ingotse to take up the work that James Murray had been doing. From time to time, a missionary would travel there to hold a service or encourage the village pastors, but the work was basically at a standstill.

The situation remained so until 1947, when Ruben C. and Nora Schwieger were commissioned by the Missionary Board to relocate the Boys' School from Kima to Ingotse. That story is told by Ruben Schwieger in his little book, "Paths for God". The captivating account of their twenty years of service to the Butso people at the Ingotse mission and in other parts of Kenya is a testament to their commitment to service and the faithfulness of God.



This sign marks the entrance
to Ingots Mission
Kenya, East Africa



Rev. Ruben C. and Nora Schwieger served at Ingots Mission 1947 - 1967

Murray Memorial Chapel is seen in the background

