

# THE RADIO FURAHA STORY:

THE FIRST DECADE

PROTAS KANEMELA

“To Proclaim the Word of God to all People”



*“The two most important types of communication are between man and God and between human beings. Communication is more than just our ability to talk, but also to listen. As we communicate with God, the first part of that communication is listening. God’s primary ways of communication with us are through the His Word (Romans 10:17) and by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26)”*

## **Declaration**

I, Protas Kanemela, Manager of Radio Furaha 96.7 MHz, broadcasting from Iringa, Tanzania...

Declare that this book is approved for publishing under the guidance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), Diocese of Iringa (DIRA) and General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Andendekisye Ngogo.

I further declare that the contents of this book are true and based on trustworthy sources, many of them firsthand. Nevertheless, any historical inaccuracy or misunderstanding in this book is mine alone and not the fault of the ELCT or DIRA.

## **Acknowledgments**

Starting a radio station for the purpose of ministry may be one of the best decisions a Christian organization can make and certainly fulfills the obligation to preach the gospel to all creation. Since it is such a powerful communications medium, what better way to reach the masses than through radio, because is simple to carry and manageable to all mankind.

In Tanzania, radio is utilized more than any other form of entertainment, with people listening an average of over three hours each day. An incredible 96% of adults aged 25 to 54 listen to radio on a regular basis. The 12- to 24-year-old demographic, enabled by the nearly ubiquitous mobile phone, is not far behind.

This history of Radio Furaha could not have been written and published without the valuable contributions of many individuals who contributed time, expertise, and helpful suggestions that significantly enhanced the quality and accuracy of the content. To mention a few: from DIRA, Bishop Emeritus Dr. Owdenburg M. Mdegella, Rev. Dean Blastone Gaville, General Secretary Nayman Chavalla, Deputy Provost of Iringa College Rev. Dr. Richard Lubawa and Noel Ilomo. From the US there were Rev. Paul and Dr. Sally Harris, Randy Dufault, Dr. Jim Hart, Dr. David Klevan, Al Peterson, and Dr. Noel Petit. I regret that there is not room to list the many others who helped put Radio Furaha on the air and have sustained it for a decade.

Finally, we thank our families, who provided us with the foundation on which we have built our careers. They continue to be a source of great support.

## **Preface by Pastor Paul and Dr. Sally Harris**

We first met Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella in 1990 while we were in Iringa. In one long conversation with him, during the weeks when the Diocese of Iringa (DIRA) was preparing to expand to a much more spacious site down the road, he suggested that Sally and Paul become involved in helping DIRA found a theological training school. He had already been talking about this to others, particularly to Arnie and Mary Blomquist. This idea soon morphed into a larger vision that what was really needed was a university, the bishop cogently arguing that the Church needs not only pastors but businessmen, lawyers, journalists, etc. Miraculously, the university was founded five years later, with Arnie as first Provost and Mary as CFO. Iringa University College was the first private university in Tanzania, made possible by a new law allowing non-government post-secondary education in the country for the first time since independence in 1964. In 1999, Sally taught Communication Skills, and Paul taught Theology there for a semester. We continued to teach there for three months each year from 2004 to 2017.

In 2005, Bishop Mdegella came up with another crazy idea: he wanted Paul to start a radio station. At first, the Bishop thought it should be sited on the university campus and connected to programs offered. However, the journalism program was nascent and more importantly, it was clear that the government had final say over university curricula, even in private universities, and would therefore have some control over a radio station used to train students. Therefore, since the Bishop essentially wanted a station that would minister to the needs of DIRA's church members, it was decided that it would be best to try to create a station owned and operated by DIRA.

Thereafter, Paul and some DIRA staff members were engaged for four long years in what seemed to be endless governmental red tape keeping them from getting a radio license. Despite roadblocks and frustration, DIRA set up a Radio Board so that it could hire a radio manager whose initial job would be to help get the necessary license. A list of potential managers was drawn up and at least eight people were interviewed. Protas Kanemela stood out as having radio experience, a winning personality, and strong Christian faith. Some members of the Board felt strongly that the radio manager should be a DIRA pastor. Paul argued strenuously that it was better to choose a person with experience in radio. In retrospect, this was a crucial decision.

Protas Kanemela has proved to be everything we had prayed for. Of course, the bulk of RF's financial support has come from US donors, but that RF has endured for a decade is due in large part to Protas' efforts. Early on, he was the only person "on staff." Once he assembled an actual staff, he was coach, counselor, and captain. He could not afford the luxury of "regular office hours." Once broadcasting began in 2010, keeping RF on the air meant constant crises and many emergency, middle-of-the-night trips up the stony, unpaved road to Mafifi Hill to fix malfunctioning transmission equipment. For over a decade, Protas has put amazing energy into the constant work of finding, repairing, maintaining, and upgrading equipment. Under his guidance, Radio Furaha moved rather quickly from transmitting at 300 watts to 2000 watts. It also moved quickly to being on air 24/7.

Radio Furaha staff members have also been highly motivated to keep Radio Furaha on the air. This commitment extends to their being willing to wait for their salaries to be paid, sometimes for months. Other hopeful people have joined RF and worked for months without pay as they

wait to see if a paying position might open up. Americans find it hard to imagine that anyone can go months without pay, but it happens with some frequency in Tanzania. Going without pay is tolerable only because most people living in the Iringa Region have a *shamba*, some acreage on which they hope to raise enough maize and other food to feed their family until the next growing season. Even people with higher education and professional jobs must concern themselves with doing enough work on their farms to bring in roughly 220 pounds of maize per person per year.

An early goal for Radio Furaha was that those in Tanzania would raise the money for operating expenses and that the US Board would continue to raise money for capital expenses. This plan went into effect in 2012 and, until recently, DIRA and RF staff were able to fund operating expenses. It was hoped that advertising revenue could sustain the station. Unlike non-profit radio stations in the US which are forbidden to advertise, such stations in Tanzania are encouraged by the government to do so. As Protas notes in this story, however, training staff with little business experience to market to potential advertisers and actually finalizing contracts with businesses wanting to advertise on RF has always been difficult. Protas and his staff have found other ways to let locals know of RF's existence, and there is some support from DIRA churches. When asked during Sunday morning services if they listen to RF, almost all parishioners in DIRA churches raise their hands. And though "listener-supported radio" was an eye-opening concept to listeners when RF started, repetition of the message that listeners who want RF to stay on the air should send money has eventuated in a reasonable level of support. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has negatively impacted supporters in Iringa, especially because the pandemic has halted the tourism that sustains the country's economy. This has made it difficult for RF to find either advertisers or Tanzanian donors in 2020.

Protas and his staff have needed to be, and continue to be, innovative in creating RF's programs. They do not buy others' programs as many Christian Radio stations in the US do. They also have made radio more interactive than is usual by creating call-in shows where the audience can ask questions or comment. These are hugely popular. Imagine being a rural Tanzanian who until recently had trouble accessing media but can now get your voice heard on the air!

Looking over the four years of getting Radio Furaha on the air and ten years of broadcasting, the hand of God is surely visible. There have been small and large miracles the whole time. Difficulties finding the right people, the right equipment, and the right programming have all been solved, frequently in unexpected and surprising ways. Currently, a new tower is being installed which we hope will make RF more sustainable as it "pays for itself over six years" because it will no longer need to pay rent on someone else's tower and may even find others who want to rent space on its new tower, thereby bringing a new source of income to the station.

We pray that Radio Furaha can continue its ministry for many decades to come.

❖ Pastor Paul and Dr. Sally Harris in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

November 2020

## The Founders of Radio Furaha



Bishop Dr. Owdenburg Mdegella



Rev. Paul Harris



Rev. Sarah Mdegella



Dr. Sally Harris

*“Their dream and thought all came true.”*

Thank you for your initiative and courage to make Radio Furaha come alive.

# Chapter One

## An Introduction to Radio Furaha

*Furaha* is Swahili for “joy.” In a meeting with some diocesan staff and Pastor Paul Harris a year before the Tanzanian government granted the radio station its license, Bishop Owdenburg Mdegella suggested that it was time to choose a name for the proposed radio station. Discussion followed and suggestions were made. The Bishop then noted that one name he would have liked, *Upendo* (“love” in English), had already been taken by the Lutheran Radio Station in Dar es Salaam. He suggested *Imani Hai* (“a living faith” in English), but found it was already taken by Dodoma Anglican Radio. Finally, it was determined that *Furaha* would be a good choice.

In 2010, the Iringa Diocese (DIRA) of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) officially established Radio Furaha FM 96.7 MHz with a mission of spreading the word of God and serving both public and private organizations by offering, 24/7, inspiring broadcasts created by able local staff.

Radio is a particularly powerful and efficient way to reach large audiences. The population of the United Republic of Tanzania is almost 60 million individuals, with about 80 percent living in rural areas. Although only 7 percent of the population have electrical service, over 75 percent of households overall, and 50 percent of the poorest households (the lowest 20 percent of incomes), own a radio. For many living in rural areas, radio provides simple access to otherwise unattainable information.

More than other communications media, radio provides a significant contribution to peaceful coexistence and conflict management by providing the knowledge social groups within Tanzania need to live in harmony. Radio Furaha respects diversity in Tanzania of people across religious, political, economic, and cultural spectrums. Its programs are designed to benefit both the church and community with programming on spiritual life, education, personal development, and entertainment.

The medium has many advantages, making it an important source of news, music, and inspiration. Radio’s lack of a visual element is actually an asset. It makes what is broadcast highly personal to the listener who must use his or her imagination to create an image of the message. This aids reflection and learning.

Christian radio has been a part of worship and ministry in the world for over a century. Evangelical churches certainly benefit from the medium’s ability to attract new converts. It also has been, and continues to be, important for retaining a sense of religious community for many denominations.

DIRA’s parishioners and other residents of the Iringa Region are predominantly rural peasant farmers, so Radio Furaha seeks to encourage voiceless people to be heard by providing a communications platform to help them understand issues critical to their well-being. This includes programming that preaches the Gospel, provides Bible teaching, plays Christian music, and covers social issues. There are also programs on many other subjects like health (e.g. malaria, AIDS, COVID-19), women’s issues, and family well-being. Some programming, such as daily market updates, has been revolutionary. Historically, peasant farmers in isolated regions

did not know what prices their crops could and should bring. Without many transport options, these farmers often sold their produce to middlemen who arrived at harvest with trucks and offered rock bottom prices to take the crop to the market. Knowledge of prices elsewhere helps save peasant farmers from such exploitation.

Rural Tanzania lacks many of the communication channels Americans take for granted. Few magazines and newspapers exist, and in any case most villagers could not buy them. The literacy rate is very low, and printed materials are in relative terms very costly. Sending letters is a possibility, but the Iringa Region has no mail delivery, only P.O Boxes. There is no equivalent to US third-class mail that informs or advertises. The Iringa Diocese is spread out over a large area of challenging topography in the western Rift Valley. Historically, messages from DIRA and any Christian outreach have been done in person by pastors and evangelists serving village churches.

For years now, Radio Furaha has been telling its Lutheran listeners that Radio Furaha is a listener-supported station that belongs to them. About forty years ago, a partnership program with DIRA called *Bega Kwa Bega* (“Shoulder to Shoulder”) was created by members of the St. Paul Area Synod (SPAS) of the Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In the intervening decades, interested individuals have created numerous ministries, now usually referred to as “*Bega Kwa Bega* Affiliates.” These include groups involved in well-digging, tree-planting, agricultural education, creation of microfinance banks, and many other beneficial programs. Americans also helped DIRA improve its secondary schools, found a university, upgrade a clinic to be a regional hospital, and support an orphanage. Many programs based on Affiliate work that air on RF are paid for by some of the Affiliates. Other programs make it clear how much DIRA does in the community. DIRA parishioners feel a sense of pride when they hear on the radio about these many ministries connected to DIRA. RF has thus become an effective community-building tool.

Radio allows for repetition of crucial messages, whether they are religious, educational or social, since many new messages hit resistance from “the way we have always done it.”

Thus, repetition is both good and necessary. Here is one instance from the Agricultural Institute which began as a separate Affiliate of DIRA and later became part of Iringa Hope Microfinance. After independence, the government encouraged people to farm and many became smallholders on plots they would farm by hand. After farmers harvested their maize, they typically burned their fields because it is laborious to till in corn stalks by hand in preparation for a new planting. As smallholders, they and their parents had never been taught about how to improve the soil by conserving organic material. Poor crop yields were the predictable result of not nurturing the soil. Nevertheless, it took Ag Institute staff a long time to educate farmers about the benefits of cutting down and burying corn stalks, rather than turning them to ash. Radio Furaha enabled the repetition of both the rationale and the instructions on how to improve the soil. RF also repeated messages about spacing plants, so that seed was not wasted. Without instruction, farmers planted more seed than necessary “just in case.” Such examples can be multiplied. No matter what the issue, repetition makes for better communication.

In short, the two million people in Radio Furaha’s listening area helped through spiritual life programs and educational programs. They also really enjoy the music.

1987 Bishop Mdegella, during consecration in his inaugural speech, said, “Radio should be found in kitchens, bedrooms, restrooms, offices, gyms, cars, markets, streets, clubs, Daladala’s’ (mini-buses), and buildings used for worship.” He went on to say that the new radio station he envisioned would play a central role in many people’s daily lives, awakening them in the morning, accompanying them to work, and soothing them to sleep at night. “It would be a talking book for nonreaders, a friend to the lonely, and a guide for those who cannot see.”

## **USA RADIO FURAHIA BOARD**



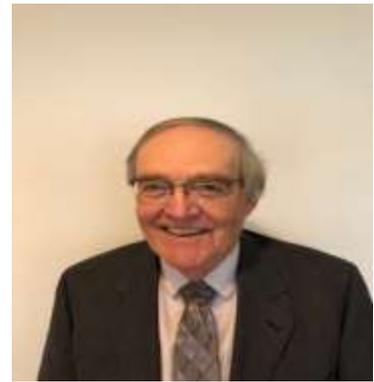
Dr. Noel Petit (Chairman)



Randy Dufault (Member)



Rev. Paul Harris (Member)



Dr. David Klevan (Member)



Albert Peterson (Member)



Dr. James Hart (Member)

## Chapter Two

### The Project Begins: June 2007 to January 2009

Radio Furaha's journey to reality began with an exploration of current Lutheran radio stations in Tanzania, including Radio Upendo in Dar es Salaam and Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) in Moshi-Kilimanjaro. A diocesan task force headed by Rev. Dr. Richard Lubawa conducted meetings and organized travel under the supervision of DIRA's General Secretary, Nayman Chavalla. Figure 1 shows the minutes of one task force meeting.

#### Minutes of the Radio Task Force on May 18, 2008 at Lutheran Centre

1. The report of the Radio Progress was accepted and the way forward was agreed upon in order to launch Radio Furaha on Dec 25, 2008.
2. **To Secure the Interview with TCRA:** It was agreed that Rev. Dr. Lubawa and General Secretary will present Radio Furaha and Tumaini University-Iringa the follow up to TCRA. Presence always plays a big role to achieve success in the project. Rev. Dr. Lubawa will call TCRA to Mr. Fredrick Ntobi to make an appointment. After all that, the Task Force will contact Bishop Alex Malasusa or call Balozi Maliki, Hon. Prof. Peter Msola, and Regional Commissioner for more assistance. Pastor Lamont Koerner suggested that on 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2008 is travelling to Dar, then if Rev. Dr. Lubawa could join to the trip and be back 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2008.
3. The Meeting accepted HCJB to provide a station Manager and Technician for Radio Furaha for the first year or two. Their presence will help Radio Furaha staff acquire skills and knowledge especially to equip our own Radio Technician.
4. **Operating Budget:** We have to find funds for the sustainability of the Project. The members asked the Diocese when writing proposals for its Evangelism programs must include the Radio Project to seek donations from the FILM, DLM, LWF and LMC to support for the run the Project. The General Secretary confirmed that for the 2009-2010 Ilula Hospital will get lots of money for sensitization of the Malaria Project, some of them will be indicated to Radio Furaha. LCCB also showed positive to the Radio project as well. Approach individuals who can support the project as well.
5. **Programming:** Postponed till we get enough time for discussion.
6. **Construction of the Studio:** Pastor Paul Harris has said that USD \$ 5,000 for the renovations of the Studios. He suggests that, there is necessary to **scan** the BOQ and send to HCJB for the approval.
7. **Other Business:** Pastor Paul Harris and Protas will start writing proposal to different organizations about funds. The ELCT-Iringa Diocese should put in mind for fundraising. General Secretary will include in the budget of 2009-2010 Radio project, so that can get money for the sustainability.
8. **Next Meeting:** After the confirmation of appointment to TCRA then next meeting will be scheduled. This was one of the meetings which Rev. Dr.

Richard Lubawa was chairing and come to the solutions like that.

### **Figure 1 - Minutes of the May 18, 2008 Radio Furaha Task Force Meeting**

After visits from staff of Radio Upendo and Radio Voice of the Gospel (the latter's Director, Mr. Calvin Lyaro, and engineer, Martin Ahnert), it was determined that Radio Furaha could start up with a studio configuration consisting of three sections: a live room (the On-Air Studio), a discussion room (the Round Table Studio), and a small production control room (the Production Studio) for recording, editing, and mixing. DIRA had some suitable classroom and office space in a brick-and-concrete building that could be repurposed for studios and RF staff offices.

Interiors of the rooms would need to be reconfigured. Specifically, there would need to be windows between the three studio rooms, allowing for visual communication. Windows in Tanzanian buildings frequently are not even weather-stripped. These Radio Furaha windows would need to be double-paned and properly caulked in order to isolate sound from different programs airing or being recorded at the same time. Where possible, it was determined that the studio could retain exterior windows as they would help with the well-being of the staff, although these exterior windows would also need to be double-paned and caulked to prevent outside sound leakage.

Overall, it was a small miracle that the already extant building on the Diocese campus could be made into a good environment for a Radio station.



**Figure 2 - Studio Renovation**

Sound management is a key need for any audio production facility. Rooms should not echo and should be well-insulated from sound coming from outside or from any adjoining rooms. As one can see in Figure 2, creative and inexpensive sound proofing for the RF studio came from using the kinds of square egg dividers found in Tanzanian grocery stores. These squares were affixed to the walls and then covered with cloth.

In addition to creating the studios, it was necessary to secure firm bids and calculate the costs for broadcast equipment like a FM transmitter, lightning arrestors, a studio transmitter link (STL), and all the necessary fittings and cables.

Additional tasks included the negotiation of tower rental agreements with Roman Catholic Radio Maria, VODACOM, Tanzania Telecommunication Corporation Limited (TTCL), and Radio Ebony Dar.

Ultimately the DIRA construction department, under the supervision of the radio project manager, prepared bills of quantity (BOQ) for the studios in January 2009. Estimates for the necessary renovation totaled \$9,992 USD, or more than 16,000,000/= Tanzanian Shillings (Tshs) at that time, for materials and construction labor.

A July 2008 trip to Dar es Salaam helped DIRA understand the government requirements from the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA). The team also sought advice from Radio Upendo, Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG), and the HCJB Global Technology Center for the technical details necessary for Radio Furaha to work. Based on recommendations it received, Radio Furaha decided to implement a completely digital programming system. Digital recorders would capture program content, content would be edited on a personal computer workstation and the resulting program would be broadcast using live-radio-assist software.



**Figure 3 - Acoustic materials and window in the Round Table studio**

At this point in working on getting Radio Furaha licensed, there was an opportunity to meet with a number of different stakeholders in order to negotiate various agreements and seek additional support. They included Pastor Stefan Holmstrom, Director of Swedish Evangelical Missionaries (SEM), the Lutheran Mission Corporation (LMC), IFAD, TUNAJALI, government officials, and SIDO to understand options for cooperation on program funding and other sponsorships. These organizations deal with development projects; the TUNAJALI organization is for HIV/AIDS education and prevention.

One aim of Radio Furaha has been to give attention to HIV/AIDS, because the Iringa region is one of the leading areas for new infections, and the death of parents from AIDS has left many children as orphans.

# RADIO FURAHA TECHNICAL & ADVICE TEAM



Mr. Nayman Chavalla



Mr. Protas Kanemela



Rev. Dr. Richard Lubawa



Mr. Noel Ilomo



The Easter Lutheran Church Minnesota, USA



Radio Furaha Iringa, Tanzania building (Main Studio)

## Chapter Three

### Government Approval

The radio wave spectrum is a very finite resource and is therefore tightly controlled by every nation. Licenses are not easy to obtain. In Tanzania, The Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) issues those licenses through a very complex set of procedures. For those tasked with starting Radio Furaha, it took a lot of faith to carry on trying to get a license in the years between 2005 and 2008.

A good business plan was paramount since it was key to receiving a broadcast license. In an application letter to TCRA, DIRA General Secretary Mr. Nayman Chavalla indicated that the diocese was “desirous of establishing a non-commercial radio station (Radio Furaha) in Iringa.” Included with the letter was a resolution made by the DIRA Executive Council on November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 that committed DIRA to supplying the initial capital expenses for the establishment of the Radio station including civil works, equipment, technical support, and other expenses in the amount of 78,000,000/= Tshs.

For the capital to acquire the needed radio equipment, Pastor Paul Harris agreed to raise about \$15,303.62 USD. This money, the equivalent of 30,346,000/= Tsh at the time, was paid to the HCJB company to get complete transmission facilities for Radio Furaha and to pay for clearance purposes, shipping, installation charges, tower rental, TCRA license, TCRA inspection fees, etc.

In addition, DIRA committed to provide 4,000,000/= Tshs a month (48,000,000/= Tshs each year) for operating costs.

Several diocesan projects and affiliates committed to sponsorship of programs directly related to their missions. These included:

- A Local Community Capacity-Building Program. Its mission is combat HIV/AIDS in the younger population.
- The Malaria Program.
- Gift of Water Gift of Life (GOWGOL). Its mission is to provide clean water through wells and other water sources and to conduct community health education.
- The Department of Family Nurture. Its mission is to educate citizens on human rights, gender issues, and the general nurturing of the family.

Other information required for the application included recent DIRA financial statements.

Several important milestones were passed in 2008; TCRA approved Radio Furaha’s business plan.

On June 27, 2008, a delegation from the diocese successfully completed an in-person interview. The delegation that travelled to Dar es Salaam for the TCRA interview included General Secretary Nayman Chavalla, Bishop Dr. Owdenburg Mdegella, Dr. Richard Lubawa, Rev. Paul Harris, Noel Ilomo, Enock Ugulumu, and Protas Kanemela. Individual responsibilities of the delegation members included:

- General Secretary Chavalla and Rev. Dr. Lubawa as trustees defending diocesan resolutions initiating the project and arguing for the sustainability of the project.
- Mr. Noel Ilomo and Enock Ugulumu presenting the finances and balance sheet for the project.
- Protas Kanemela presenting the preparation done so far on the studio and specifications and requirements for needed equipment along with the projected schedule for preparations to be complete.

The entire delegation defended the mission of the station “To Proclaim the Word of God to all People” without discrimination or segregation. It was made clear that the programming would be of a religious nature and would also support community development.

The initial license fee of \$1,500 USD was paid on July 21, 2008. On September 2, TCRA issued a construction permit for Radio Furaha FM 96.7 MHz. Having for years doggedly pursuing getting RF licensed, those now involved in doing so were somewhat dismayed to find that the TCRA expected them to shift immediately to warp speed. The construction permit was issued for a mere twelve months. During that time, Radio Furaha would need to finish building the studios, ordering all necessary equipment, installing it all, and demonstrating that it worked correctly.

A number of delays occurred over the course of the twelve months granted in the construction permit. When it was clear that the September 2009 deadline could not be met, steps were taken to extend the deadline. Nayman Chavalla wrote to the TCRA.

*“We have had a busy and somewhat challenging year. We are writing to give an update on the progress of Radio Furaha 96.7 MHz. Also, we would appreciate your letting us know the names and emails of other people at TCRA with whom we should be communicating concerning the progress of Radio Furaha as we approach the September 2 anniversary of Radio Furaha’s provisional licensing.”*

He went on to say that work on the project had begun as expected, and he provided a list of completed accomplishments. Those included:

- Successfully raising \$60,000 USD for the capital budget. Those funds came both from DIRA and from the United States
- Completed renovation of the diocese’s building to be used as studio space
- Completion by the electrical contractor of the installation of internal wiring and needed equipment, including two air conditioners to keep instruments from overheating
- The permit acquired from TANESCO (the Tanzanian power company) to hook up and bring wiring the final 20 meters to the studios, accomplished before the end of July
- Progress on the installation of soundproofing and other furniture with a projected completion date of July 27.

Pending in the run-up to the deadline were two major unfinished tasks:

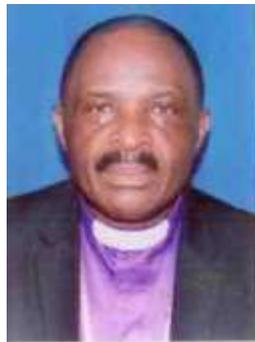
- Negotiations for rental space on a Mafifi Hill, Iringa tower were underway, but not yet complete. When they could be completed was uncertain.

- Acquiring proposals for studio and transmission equipment turned out to be a more complex and difficult process than originally anticipated. Finding high quality, yet affordable, equipment which would serve the needs of the new station was tantamount. Plans that this work would be completed before August were looking very unrealistic.

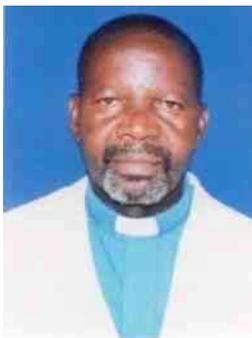
Based on the initial timetable and progress-to-date, DIRA pushed the government to extend the inaugural air date to April 12, 2009. Giving the length of time required for shipping much of the equipment, even if some things could be expedited, April 2009 seemed to be the earliest date that everything could be ready.

Pastor Paul Harris had been fundraising in the US, but it was getting more and more difficult to convince potential donors that getting Radio Furaha on the air was actually going to be possible.

## **IRINGA DIOCESE (DIRA) MANAGEMENT TEAM**



Bishop Blaston Gaville



Rev. Andenekisye Ngogo  
(General Secretary)



Rev. Askali Mgeyekwa  
(Assistant to the Bishop)



Mr. Vincent Masanula  
(Treasurer)

## Chapter Four

### Funding the Station

About five months before the initial construction deadline set by the Tanzanian government, Nayman Chavalla, Protas Kanemela and Pastor Paul Harris were trying to decide what transmission power would be possible when Radio Furaha first went on the air. It was decided to begin with 300 watts. Part of the reasoning was that the available capital budget raised from the Saint Paul Area Synod and other friends from Minnesota was \$45,000 USD. Money that DIRA had contributed to that point had primarily gone into paying for studio renovation.



**Figure 4 - Radio Furaha initially shared tower space three other stations**

From the beginning, it had been the plan for US stakeholders to raise money for capital expenses and for DIRA and the station itself to fund operating expenses. Sustainability of the station (operating expenses) is the responsibility of DIRA. In addition to funds promised from DIRA/RF, other donors promised to contribute sums that would raise the 2009 operating budget to \$67,300 USD. Projected administrative costs included salaries, allowances for part-time staff, travel allowances, stationery, the annual radio license renewal fee, and other expenses.



**Figure 5 - Audio processor/encoder and Studio-to-Transmitter Link (STL) transmitter at the studio**

Fortunately, interest in the station and programming ideas started coming in from some European organizations like the Berlin Mission, Swedish Evangelical Missionaries (SEM), and the Leipzig Mission. Ultimately, the Leipzig Mission signed on to be a strong supporter of Radio Furaha; it donated funds that were used to purchase condenser microphones, a used vehicle, a photocopy machine, computer printer, and used computers. Since 2012, the Leipzig Mission has continued to sustain its partnership with Radio Furaha, sending volunteers and technicians who can help solve technical problems.



**Figure 6 - STL Receiver and 300-watt transmitter on Mafifi Hill**

Friends of Radio Furaha in the US gave generously to the project. Members of Easter Lutheran in Eagan, MN provided a core of committed people. Their prayers and generosity during this year before Radio Furaha went on the air were given major assistance by Rev. Paul and Dr. Sally Harris and members of Easter Lutheran Church in Eagan, Minnesota. Three large, high-capacity electrical generators were given, allowing for effective backup to address the electric company's frequent power blackouts. Other contributors include Randy Dufault of Easter Lutheran, who delivered a new master control console in 2014 and Dr. Noel Petit of Fish Lake Lutheran in Harris, Minnesota, who developed and supports the mechanism used to stream Radio Furaha throughout the world over the internet.

Dr. David Klevan, from Immanuel Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, has been particularly helpful finding funding for health-related programming. Topics covered include stress management; depression, anxiety, and major mental illnesses like bipolar disorder and schizophrenia; suicide prevention; chemical dependence and addiction to alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, heroin, cocaine and kwat; heart disease; atherosclerosis, blood pressure and cholesterol management; diabetes; violence; accidents; HIV/AIDS; malaria, and Hepatitis B, and the health advantages of clean water.

A US-based committee consisting of Pastor Paul Harris, Randy Dufault, Dr. James Hart, Dr. David Klevan, Al Peterson, and Dr. Noel Petit was formed in 2016-2017 to continue to raise funds that are used both for capital improvements and, in some cases, for operating expenses.

## Chapter Five

### Live Broadcasting: 2010

On June 1, 2010, Radio Furaha took to the airwaves 24/7 with regular programming. This longed-for event was preceded by a very busy three months used to recruit staff and train them to create and deliver professional radio programs.

Back in March, completing the equipment installation required technical assistance. A request for help went out to the director of Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG), Samwel Lyimo. He came to Iringa and supervised the setup of the studio-to-transmitter link and the 300-watt transmitter. On March 8, 2010 the equipment was ready for the final TCRA inspection.

Also in March, it was decided that music could be aired even before staff had prepared regular programming. So beginning on March 10, Station Manager Protas Kanemela, along with Brown E. Mdegella and Samwel Lubida, began broadcasting music. They also created a jingle that identified the station as Radio Furaha 96.7 MHz. While using the music broadcasts to discover if all systems were working, the staff began to prepare the programme lineup. By June 1, as noted above, RF staff members were creating 18 hours of original programming each day. This is what the station had committed to on its license application.



**Figure 7 - Loveday Romanus, one of the first Radio Furaha staff, in a live session**

Interviews for Radio Furaha staff began April 4, 2010. After receiving more than 70 applications, the management team selected 42 for interviews. A nine-hour marathon of interviews at the DIRA offices resulted in selection of the initial staff. Interview questions included general inquiries about education and background work. Ultimately, the chosen individuals had all achieved Form IV to Form VI (equivalent to tenth through twelfth grade in the US) or post-secondary certificates in journalism or other disciplines.

The initial staff included Stadia Gustavu, Noel Kagu, Moses Luhwago, Sophia Matagi, Grace Mbembati, Alex Mkenwa, Tumaini Petro, and Vanessa Saria. Ambangile Mbwanji was hired as program manager. Protas Kanemela trained all these new hires while continuing to do his Radio Manager duties as well.



**Figure 8 - A long day of interviews for Radio Furaha staff**

During the station's initial months and years, Pastor Paul Harris came regularly each year to Iringa to teach Theology students as a visiting professor at Iringa University College of Tumaini University. Pastor Paul and some members at Easter Lutheran church supported Radio Furaha's salaries and daily expenses. Almost every Sunday, he went out to a DIRA congregation. Many were several hours' drive from the City of Iringa. Before he preached, he would always ask three questions: "Who listens to Radio Furaha?" "Who likes Radio Furaha?" "Who supports Radio Furaha?" Responses were predictable. Almost all hands would go up for the first question. Almost all hands stayed up for the second question, and women began to ululate. But to the third question, there were few hands and an awkward silence. The Harris, who had been raised listening to Christian radio, realized that teaching DIRA parishioners about listener-supported radio was going to need to be a priority. It was clear that people in the listening region were very happy to have Radio Furaha inspiration, education, and evangelism. It just was news to them that they should also financially support this new missionary endeavor.



**Figure 9 - Testing the transmitter and filter**



**Figure 10 – A contrasting world: the guard's hut on Mafifi Hill**

## Chapter Six

### Sustaining Christian Radio:

Radio Furaha is a Christian Radio Station with the motto, *Kutangaza Injili kwa Watu Wote*, “To Proclaim the Word of God to all People.”

Christian radio has the advantage that people do not need to come to a particular place to hear the message; the message can come to them. Also, Christian radio can minister to people who do not want to enter a church building. And Christian radio can minister to a larger population than local churches can.

Christian radio can be a powerful ministry. The Church is commanded by Christ to preach the Gospel throughout the world (Math. 28:18-20). Christians are also expected to minister to the whole person. In Christ’s words, they are to feed the hungry and thirsty, invite strangers in, clothe the naked, tend the sick, and visit those in prison (Math. 25:34-36). That is why, historically, new missions’ endeavors are started with the expectation that they will minister to the whole person. The usual pattern is that a mission planting starts by first building a church, often followed as quickly as possible by founding a school and opening a medical dispensary. Like many new mission endeavors, Radio Furaha from its inception was poised to minister to the spirit, the mind, and the body.

The foundational task of the Church is to preach the Gospel. As Radio Furaha’s motto says, preaching the Gospel is its main task. Since RF belongs to the Lutheran Diocese of Iringa (DIRA), there is a wealth of possibilities for finding sermons to broadcast. Rev. Kenneth Comoro is the Radio Furaha chaplain. He is responsible for asking DIRA pastors to choose some of their sermons to be aired. These sermons have usually been preached in a church’s Sunday morning worship service and are aired on Sunday afternoons. Another source of sermons is visitors to DIRA. Since DIRA is connected to the St. Paul Area Synod of Minnesota (SPAS) through its partnership program called *Bega Kwa Bega* “Shoulder-To-Shoulder,” many SPAS churches send groups to visit their sister congregations. Usually, a pastor accompanies the group, and this pastor can be asked to preach a sermon, with a translator, that can be recorded and aired on RF. Other pastors from SPAS who might preach on RF have come to Iringa for three-month stays as Pastor-Teachers at DIRA’s University of Iringa; other SPAS pastors visit Iringa because they are involved in Bega kwa Bega Affiliates like Iringa Hope Microfinance.

The second foundational task of the Church is teaching which can be done by a number of well-qualified people in the Diocese. This is good news because Radio Furaha listeners often say that the programming they appreciate most is Bible teaching. Americans might compare modern-day Iringa, especially in rural areas, to colonial America. It is hard to find books in villages. In November 2020, a hard-cover, dual translation Swahili/English Bible cost \$20 USD. The average annual income in Tanzania in November 2020 was \$536 USD, about \$45 USD a month (Wikipedia, accessed 9 November 2020). That means that a good-quality Bible costs about half a month’s income. How many Americans would spend half of their month’s income on a Bible? Not surprisingly, few rural families own a Bible. It is likely that only those who have graduated from secondary school own a personal copy. This means that Bible teaching on RF frequently is acquainting listeners with Bible texts that they are unfamiliar with. So it is literally good news.

Soon after it first went on the air, Radio Furaha also firmly committed to broadcasting another kind of Bible teaching called Theological Education by Extension (TEE). TEE was well-established in the 1990's for DIRA pastors and evangelists by Swedish Lutherans and overseen by Stefan Holmstrom. Historically in Tanzanian Lutheran churches, individual pastors had trained the evangelists working under them. The standard pattern was that a "mother church" would have an ordained pastor acting as the head and administrative pastor. Under his or her charge were a number of "daughter churches" which the head pastor visited in rotation, like a circuit rider in American churches on the frontier. The rest of the time, the satellite "daughter" churches were under the leadership of evangelists, most of them lay people who, for a small monthly stipend, gave pastoral care to their congregations. One of the main pastor's jobs was to continually educate the evangelists. As one can imagine, some main pastors were better educators than others, so how much training an evangelist received could vary widely. TEE stepped in to "level the playing field" and make some Bible teaching and Theological Education with Extension more standardized in the Diocese.

Almost twenty years before Radio Furaha went on the air, Paul and Sally Harris were invited to visit a 1990 TEE class at the Kihesa church in "suburban" Iringa. In a large hall outside the sanctuary, about 25 evangelists and pastors were being housed for three months while they completed a segment of their TEE training. They were sleeping on the floor of an otherwise empty hall; their meals of *ugali* (corn meal mush, the Iringa staple food) were being cooked for them by volunteer women of the church. Kihesa was already partnered with St. Mark's Lutheran Church in North St. Paul Area Synod and a gift from that congregation's recent visit had been dozens of Minnesota Twins daypacks. The Harris' saw that about two dozen these daypacks had been given to the TEE students and were carefully spaced on the floor of the sleeping hall next to blankets and pads, each pack holding a student's meager personal belongings. There was nothing else in the hall except, against the wall, many burlap sacks of cornmeal. Pastor Paul Harris was told that these also belonged to the students. Students who wanted to attend TEE classes were required to bring enough food to sustain them for the entire teaching session. Pastor Harris wondered at the level of commitment that led a person to secure enough cornmeal, leave home for many months, and "camp out" for a lengthy stay in the equivalent of a church basement.

Radio Furaha radically changed the way TEE could be delivered. Essentially, it changed TEE into a radio version of a correspondence course, a kind of precursor to online education. No longer would students need to leave home to do their TEE coursework. Instead, a TEE student could register for a TEE course and get the "syllabus" of "lecture dates" and assignments for the "term." Each lecture would be broadcast on Radio Furaha at an appointed time. (Actually, it cost little more to broadcast each lecture several times during the week, leaving evangelists and pastors the option to pick the broadcast time most convenient for them or to listen to the lecture more than once). The student would listen to the lecture, complete the homework assigned, and deliver it to the TEE "desk" to be graded or commented on. Then a second lecture would be aired and so on to the completion of the course. Soon some listeners who were not involved in TEE discovered that they could listen to TEE lectures without actually being registered students; in fact, no one would stop anyone from listening to TEE lectures, be they teenagers, mothers of small children, or farmers who had never had a chance to attend much school. TEE Bible teaching was available to whoever knew the broadcast schedule.

To repeat: Radio Furaha listeners continually express delight at having good Bible teaching available to them. Radio Furaha can choose from an array of Bible teachers. It can even broadcast rallies where well-known evangelists draw interdenominational crowds.

Another important and well-loved Radio Furaha offering is Christian music. It provides both inspirations to Christians and evangelism of non-Christians. Over the years, Radio Furaha staff have heard many stories of people coming to Christ because of the teachings and music they heard on the radio. Perhaps this is not surprising. Radio Furaha is eclectic in the music it airs for six or seven hours per day. Some of it is old, familiar hymns from the Swahili Lutheran hymnbook used throughout Tanzania. This sort of music, as it is in America, is based on four-part German choral music that has been a mainstay of Lutheran worship since Martin Luther. Many beloved hymns are Swahili translations of hymns sung worldwide. That is why visitors from US churches who visit their Shoulder To Shoulder “*Bega Kwa Bega*” partner congregations comment that they feel at home. They often know the music and can hum along to accompany those singing the words in Swahili. Other hymns have been composed by Tanzanians for soprano/alto/tenor/base choirs. These are the kinds of hymns sung by a DIRA church’s “main” or “adult” choirs. People are glad to hear them on the air.

Tanzanian churches, even small ones in rural villages, though, would not think of having only a main choir. It is almost mandatory, no matter how small the village church, to have two additional choirs, one that has choreographed dancing and singing to accompany soloists and the other, a “youth” choir whose members include teenagers and additional “youths” in their twenties or thirties. The music chosen by the dancing-singing choirs is often “contemporary Christian music” composed by well-known artists. That of youth choirs is often “Gospel music” or compositions of their own.

Radio Furaha therefore airs Christian music in the wide range of musical styles that a typical Iringa Lutheran hears in church any given Sunday. It can also play music imported from other countries. RF staff members are usually young and savvy about what is new. This may account for the high praise listeners have for RF’s music offerings.

Although for reasons of sound fidelity, Radio Furaha prefers to air professionally recorded music, the station made its first mark on the consciousness of area listeners in 2010 with a live transmission of DIRA’s Cantate Domino Day featuring many of the choirs from churches in the diocese. A bit of history is needed here.

DIRA has a staff person responsible to see that all its churches’ choir directors receive some music training and guidance. New songs that DIRA thinks congregations should learn are taught to the choir directors. Before Radio Furaha was founded, DIRA found a clever way to keep these choir directors focused on improving their choirs. DIRA created an annual contest judged by a panel of judges that all churches could enter. It is called *Cantate Domino*. It usually takes place on a day in May or June. A DIRA church is proud when it is chosen to host the contest. Because there may be as many as 30 or more choirs and each sings two songs, the choir contest lasts all day, from about 9am to past sunset. One song is required to be a classic German choral-type hymn chosen by DIRA that every choir must sing so its performance can be compared to every other choir’s. People are very proud when their choir ranks high in this judgment. The second number, also judged, is the unique choice of each choir. Over the years, it has become popular for this second number to be informed by the indigenous music and dance of the Hehe, the most

populous local tribe, with its dancing and singing accompaniments done in Hehe dress with Hehe instruments like handmade drums, ankle bells, and whistles.

Paul and Dr. Sally Harris were in Iringa for the first Cantate Domino recorded by the brand-new Radio Furaha staff. It was a memorable, albeit very long, day for a number of reasons. One was that, early in the morning, Sally was supposed to drive some staff and recording equipment to the host church in Kidamali, about an hour's drive from Iringa Town. The car broke down. Another car was called for, so the recording equipment finally did get to the Kidamali church before too many choirs had performed. When the RF car arrived, Sally and Paul discovered that the contest was taking place in the large new Kidamali sanctuary that was still under construction. That it was roofless meant that Paul had to break the custom of men taking off their hats in church so he wouldn't sunburn his bald head. But, as the singing continued on past sundown, the roofless church, filled now with floodlight, was a beautiful sight. The music recorded that day was played many times by the new station.

For other programming for Christians, especially Lutherans in DIRA churches, Radio Furaha can go beyond preaching, teaching, and playing Christian music. Radio Furaha does not buy programming; it composes and writes all its own programs. Thus, there is always a need for new material. Fortunately, DIRA has many departments that local Lutherans do well to learn more about. For instance, there is a Women's Department, so programs on child and family health, nutrition, and child development have been aired on Radio Furaha for over a decade. There is also the Malaria Project, so news about how to protect oneself from mosquitoes and how to treat malaria have been aired. Some Bega kwa Bega affiliates have funded a year's worth of programming connected to their areas of concern. Iringa Hope Microfinance and the Shoulder-to-Shoulder Ilula Hospital Affiliates have funded programs for many years. These and other programs enable an expansive response to the mandate to minister to the whole person.

Following is a list of how Radio Furaha responds to a large number of societal needs:

- **The need to learn Best Practices: Radio Furaha develops its own programmes on** best practices at home or on the farm and helps promote community conversation about them.
- **The need for Engagement: Radio Furaha** strengthens, expands, and diversifies engagement by providing meaningful information and discussion about public issues.
- **The need for Information and Civic Education: Radio Furaha can air** information about elections, governance, and public affairs to help address challenges that Tanzanians face.
- **The need to Promote Active Citizenship: Radio Furaha can encourage** Tanzanians to take active roles in their communities and government.

Radio can offer a comprehensive way to promote justice. It can invite participation of many people and encourage them to respond, allow dialogue between the different sides, identify people's hopes, promote relationships of trust, expose myths and stereotypes. It can provide a balanced analysis of the causes of conflict, and provide understanding of resolution processes. Over time, it can widen perspectives so that there can be a better future for everyone.

Chapter Seven notes that the Tanzanian government expects radio stations to support themselves with advertising that can pay rental fees, staff salaries and pension contributions, travel costs, electricity, equipment maintenance and replacement, etc. Radio Furaha has found that advertising is insufficient support, so it has elicited program sponsorships. Apart from DIRA departments and Bega kwa Bega affiliates and other American individual donors, other sources of income have included the Leipzig Mission, NAFAKA (The Tanzanian Staples Value Chain) and Johns Hopkins University (JHU).

In early 2014 a partnership with the Leipzig Mission allowed for the construction of a Radio Furaha repeater located at the hospital site in Ilula. Putting that location on the air greatly expanded coverage in the Ilula local area, which is beyond the reach of the Mafifi Hill transmitter. A primary motivation for undertaking the project were demands from those in the Ilula community who wanted access to Radio Furaha.



Pastor Paul Harris (center) has been a key supporter of Radio Furaha.

Objectives of the project included:

1. Meeting the needs of the Ilula community.
2. Expanding Radio Furaha's coverage.
3. To grow Radio Furaha's mission "To proclaim the Word of God to all People."

Since Radio Furaha expanded to Ilula, other areas outside Iringa have contacted RF to see if they, too, could have repeater or satellite stations. Requests have come in from the nearby Njombe Diocese and from Sumbawanga, far away near Lake Tanganyika.



The original Radio Furaha car



Staff member Leila Kazimoto

Now underway is the construction of a new 70-meter, free-standing tower, owned by Radio Furaha, on Mafifi Hill. Once the project is complete, the current tower rental expense will disappear. The size and construction of the tower should also allow RF to generate income by renting space to other radio stations and communications users.

It has always been the goal of Radio Furaha to maintain an ethical, stable, and financially strong organization of volunteers and staff that can effectively and efficiently respond to growing and changing expectations, opportunities, and responsibilities.



Former staff member Ester Elias



Former staff member Shukuru Mgoba



Radio Furaha Staff with Pastor Paul and Dr. Sally Harris, July 2018

## Chapter Seven

### Radio Furaha: Past

When Radio Furaha began, the Iringa Region was not well-served by media.

As was true in many low-income countries, it was often the adult men in the household who controlled household radio ownership and use. In that context, a radio service needed to reach out to women by picking the times of day for broadcast when women were likely to be alone at home, or by recording and playing radio programs at places where women meet (e.g. as part of women's self-help and micro-finance group meetings).

Most areas outside the major towns did not have the electricity necessary for operating land telephones or computers. Radios, by contrast, were inexpensive and could run on batteries or solar power. As a result, radio has been by far the dominant mass medium in Africa. There is one radio receiver for every five people (compared with one telephone for every 100 people). The content of radio programmes is also "cheap to create and cheap to consume." This is especially important in countries with high illiteracy rates and where many rural people speak primarily local, indigenous languages.

Across the continent, many non-commercial radio stations have been funded primarily by external donor countries, church organizations, and international development agencies and some advertising. Stations also rely on voluntary services, leaving them perpetually struggling to develop new talent as staff members move on.

Recently Radio Furaha delivered marketing training to the staff in order to inform them about how a radio station can survive when traditional On-Air ads are not coming our way. Operating expenses like electricity, the standby generator, and travel expenses are substantial. Small advertisements, sponsored programs, promotions, and paid airtime are only partial solutions.

One way to court listener support has been to conduct concerts in Iringa, Ilula and Mafinga, attracting many people by effectively using the station to publicize the events. We produced T-shirts with our logo and sold them at the concerts, managing to both fundraise from our listeners and promote charities like DIRA's Huruma Orphanage. By effectively engaging with our audience and partnering with a several organizations by highlighting their products and services, the station has raised both revenue and visibility over the past five years. For instance, the Iringa Rural Water Supply (IRUWASA), a local water supplier, now pays for airtime. The money received is channeled to station needs. With improved content and aggressive marketing, the station has increased its income thirty-fold. Another way to gain support is to ask listeners to donate directly to the station or to give at their churches when DIRA sponsors a "Radio Furaha Sunday."

Radio Furaha has been focused on local content, attracting listeners with religious, community, and development programming. The station has a monthly target of feature stories each journalist must produce. The topics they pursue reveal what society needs. Solutions for issues like disabled children, food crisis, and poverty often lie within the community.

Below is a list of some of the areas and topics Radio Furaha has covered with its innovative programming:

**Religion:**

1. Evangelization
  1. Christian education
  2. Sermons and pastoral messages
  3. Music of many genres

**Health:**

1. Food Nutrition and balanced diet
2. Family planning and early pregnancies
3. Need for more training of health professionals
4. Availability of medicine and doctors
5. PMTCT - “Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV”

**Agriculture:**

1. Single crop dependency
2. Timely supply of pesticides
3. Water distribution

**Social services:**

1. Access to markets
2. Accessible roads
3. Employment

Radio Furaha over time has helped its listeners strengthen skills and capacity-building, reinforced networking and sharing of knowledge, and promoted legislation favorable to small-holder farmers. Important NGOs and governments are beginning to see the value of community radio stations like RF. For instance, BBC Media Action, Research Triangle Institute (RTI International), and the U.S. Embassy are favorable to community media and encourage them to train people and to work with legislators to ensure progress at the policy-level.

## **Radio Furaha: Present and Future**

Until 2018, Radio Stations in Tanzania were categorized by the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) as follows:

**Commercial Radio** Stations exist to provide news and entertainment programmes with the intent of making a profit. Calculations about how much an advertisement will cost are usually based on the popularity of the programme in which the advertisement is aired. It is therefore important for commercial stations to track the actual size of the audiences listening to particular

programs. Large corporations are willing to pay substantial amounts to advertise to a large audience.

**Community Radio** may also provide news and entertainment, but its focus is not on making a profit. Community Radio exists to serve a particular geographic region, often a rural one. Its programming reflects both local interests and the intent to educate, for instance about sustainable agriculture. Community Radio may help communities develop in any number of desired ways. Community Radio offers an opportunity for contributions by people whose voice is not heard on national radio (like “ordinary” women and youth) which can be highly empowering. Community Radio can also be licensed to broadcast in a local language rather than an official national language. The community served is unlikely to be able to support the station directly. It must seek advertising income, but the cost of running a Community Radio Station might be somewhat defrayed by having volunteers do some of the work. The Tanzanian government thinks that Community Radio stations can be mobilized for campaigns, for example by announcing campaign events, hosting talk shows with campaigners, or playing the campaign radio jingle and songs as well.

**Private Radio**, like Community Radio, is a non-profit enterprise. Private Radio exists to further the agenda of the people or organizations that support it. This may mean it collaborates with other organizations and initiatives. Private Radio may do many of the same things Community Radio does; for instance, it may work to educate its audience as well as provide news and entertainment. Private Radio may address a wide range of topics, ranging from the value of legume production to weather advisories to mental health. Because the listening audience in a geographical area in a particular station is limited to those who share the vision of the owners, the audience may be small. Usually a limited number of businesses are likely to advertise on a Private Radio Station, so funding must come from donors or the founding organization itself. Unlike Community Radio directed specifically to a local group, the message of a Private Radio Station may be relevant to a larger geographical area.

### **Radio Furaha as Community Radio:**

Originally, Radio Furaha was registered as a Non-Profit Community Radio Station. When it operated under the government license as a Community Radio Station, Radio Furaha met the criteria of being a short-range, not-for-profit station catering to the information needs of people living in a particular locality with programmes adapted to the local context.

Radio Furaha struggled to become financially secure. Many of us running Community Stations had always assumed that, once a radio station was built and went on the air, it would automatically pull advertisers its way. I used to blame advertisers for ‘ignoring’ us, but now I know better. Community stations do not attract advertising from large, national businesses. Those businesses want statistics about audience size. Community Radio stations in Tanzania must find creative ways to increase revenue or change in order to generate income for sustainability. As Radio Furaha continued to struggle to stay on the air, it learned to use bartering and fundraisers (like sponsoring community programs) to keep generate income.

### **Current Status**

In 2019, the Tanzanian government sent Radio Furaha an official letter about new regulations pertaining to radio stations. The Electronic and Postal Communications (Licensing) Regulation of 2018, having redefined some categories, now made clear that Radio Furaha fell between the categories of Commercial and Private Radio. It could no longer be licensed as a Community Radio Station. Because of the license fee schedule, it was clear that Radio Furaha should consider itself a Private Station. In fact, the new categorization is helpful because the regulations make clear that Community Radio is expected to broadcast to a very limited geographical area, and Radio Furaha hopes to expand its broadcast area.

As currently defined, both Commercial and Private Stations are privately owned; the former are owned by corporate media, and the latter are owned by a private group or individual. Neither has state sponsorship. The broadcast range of both Commercial and Private Stations can be as wide as a station can afford. In the future, Radio Furaha hopes to expand to different regions like Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Njombe, and Dodoma, several of which have already expressed great interest in its doing so. Having a larger listening audience may convince larger businesses to advertise on Radio Furaha. The station might also discover a way to tailor-make advertisements for different regions that get its signal. In any case, as a Private Station, Radio Furaha is free to pursue expansion.

The new categorization does not alter what Radio Furaha can broadcast. It can continue to offer the kinds of programmes it has been offering for years. It can continue to provide a forum for people whose voices are not heard at the national level. All the activities that Radio Furaha has been doing as a Community Radio Station can continue; the new designation as Private Radio merely means it can now seek to expand its outreach beyond the regional level. It also means that, unlike Community Radio, there is no expectation that Radio Furaha will need to air political content, although it could do so if it liked.

### **Radio, the Oldest Broadcast Medium, is in Transition**

The aim of Radio Furaha has always been to touch people's lives for the good. This goal remains as high as ever. Since it began ten years ago, listeners are now benefiting from a rapid increase in the number and range of stations they can choose from, including new community stations from around the world via the internet. All of this choice is available across a wide range of platforms from FM radio, to DAB digital radio, social media, and digital television. There will be other new technologies yet to come.

For established radio broadcasters like Radio Furaha, this explosion of choices brings new challenges through increased competition for listeners and revenues. Broadcasters also face increased costs from having to invest in new platforms. All these changes create significant pressures on the traditional patterns of local radio, which originally emerged as a result of deliberate public policy by successive governments and regulators.

This situation presents challenges both to broadcasters and to regulators. There is evidence that the changes in listening habits, together with emerging new technologies, have had a more rapid and profound impact on the radio industry than was foreseen just a few years ago. As a result, the familiar ways of regulating radio, designed for a largely local analog radio system, although they served listeners and the industry well in the past, may be ineffective and disproportionately

costly in the digital era. Radio still has a vital role in fulfilling a range of public purposes. Regulation should be focused squarely on ensuring that those public purposes are met in the interests of listeners as citizens and as consumers.

### **Future of Radio Furaha is to be Online and TV Online**

Radio Furaha can now be heard through [www.furaha.listen2myradio.com](http://www.furaha.listen2myradio.com). It is a part of the movement of Christ in Minnesota, USA for Swahili speakers, a Christian Ministry running on-line streaming services. It is hoped that expanding Radio Furaha's audience by streaming outside Tanzania will help to unite them in both prayers and support to Swahili speakers abroad.

A continued online presence may mean that Radio Furaha can someday expand to TV Station.

# Chapter 8

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Radio Furaha FM 96.7 MHz is currently licensed by the Tanzanian government as a Private Radio Station owned and operated by The Iringa Diocese (DIRA) of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) Iringa Diocese. Its mission is “to proclaim the Gospel to all people.” The station was started in 2010. It broadcasts 24/7 in Swahili, the national language of Tanzania, to the Iringa Region (*Regions* in Tanzania are geographical divisions somewhat like States in the US). Radio Furaha’s reach extends a little beyond the Iringa Region, with the signal sometimes reaching Dodoma (the official capital of Tanzania), Njombe, and Mbeya.

The station was founded in 2010 as an initiative of the St. Paul Area Synod (SPAS), Minnesota, USA, and DIRA. It provides Christian preaching, teaching, and music; community, national and world news; and culture and talk programs.

The establishment of the station was in direct response to a huge deficit in information and education about Jesus Christ and His salvation in the Iringa region and nearby areas. The more than two 2 million people in the listening area did not have easy access to Christian programming or to local and national news. Pastor Paul Harris, in explaining Radio Furaha to members of SPAS churches in Minnesota, says, “It’s like a combination of MPR (Minnesota Public Radio) and KTIS (a Christian station broadcasting to the Twin Cities from the University of Northwestern—St. Paul).”

The chapters above set out what, for the decade from 2010 to 2020, have been the aims of Radio Furaha:

- To prioritize its Christian mission to proclaim the Gospel to all people. On the Radio Furaha logo is a Bible with two verses: John 3:16 (“God so loved the world [that means you and me] that he gave his only Son, Jesus Christ, that everyone who believes in Him will not be separated from God but will live forever,”) and John 10:10 (“God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who left heaven, said: ‘I have come that you may have life, a joyful, happy life.’”)
- To enhance the appeal of radio to listeners by offering diverse programming that deals with local, regional and national issues
- To meet societal needs for information and education
- And do these things supported by listeners and donors, with as little reliance on advertising as is consistent with meeting its objectives.

In addition to its Christian programs, Radio Furaha will continue broadcasting messages on health, agriculture, Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOS), agricultural extension, and markets.

Plans are to expand Radio Furaha to surrounding areas to the following dioceses of the ELCT: the Southern, South West, Konde, South East, and Lake Tanganyika Dioceses, thereby ministering to the needs of members in those dioceses and to any other listeners attracted to its messages.

From its inception, Radio Furaha has been somewhat different from typical church-based radio stations which preach and promote the activities of a particular congregation or denomination, and from commercial or political stations. Radio Furaha's focus on listeners far from heavily populated areas of Tanzania is unusual. It has become "the voice of voiceless" and provides fairer and more objective information than stations that are either parochial or are highly commercialized or politicized. Those who support Radio Furaha believe that the creation of rural-related programs is both welcomed and highly beneficial.

Predictions about Radio Furaha's future are difficult to make. As noted above, the media world is in constant flux. RF has tried to be poised to meet that future with its entry into streaming its broadcasts so that Swahili speakers throughout the world can hear them.

In retrospect, it is remarkable, indeed miraculous, that DIRA has been able to create and sustain a radio station. Doing so is not the norm for dioceses in Tanzania. (As noted above, there are only three other radio stations in ELCT dioceses: Radio Upendo in Dar es Salaam; Utume FM in Lushoto, Tanga; and Radio Voice of the Gospel in Moshi.) Radio does not rank high in the thinking and planning of most church leaders, who too often operate as if Tanzania were still an oral culture.

Therefore, it is important for church leaders and other Christians to pay attention to the kind of radio that Radio Furaha has become. Combining Christian programs with programs on family nurture, HIV/AIDS, poverty alleviation, agricultural education, ethics and laws, etc., and appeals to the young and old in Iringa. These programs help Radio Furaha, and the Church, change peoples' lives.



"Radio Furaha Proclaims the vision and mission of the Diocese" Bishop Gaville.



RADIO  
FURAHA

**THE RADIO FURAHA STORY  
THE FIRST DECADE**



*"To Proclaim the Word of God to all People"*