CHAPTER NINETEEN

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE SPIRITAN APOSTOLATE IN AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

The work in Africa is of such tremendous scope and occupies such a key position in the Spiritan story that it has been reserved for special treatment here. Although the enormous mission territories of yesteryear have been developed and repeatedly subdivided so that many other missionary groups are now laboring where once there were only Spiritans, the Congregation's African activities still extend over nearly two million square miles of the Dark Continent and embrace thirty-one archdioceses, dioceses, and other ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

In surveying a record of such magnitude, therefore, it has been thought best to divide the subject into two chapters. The first will consider certain items and features that pertain to the Spiritan history of Africa in general, and the second will concern itself with African Holy Ghost missions in more specific fashion.

Accordingly, we now invite the reader's attention to the pioneering aspect of the Congregation's work in this part of the globe, and then to the various direct and indirect approaches which the Holy Ghost Fathers have employed in their efforts to Christianize its peoples.

2. THE PIONEERING LABOR OF THE HOLY GHOST FATHERS IN AFRICA

Although preceding chapters have referred to the important role which Spiritans have played in the civilization and Christianization of Africa, it may not be amiss to emphasize certain points here, for historians have all too frequently been prone to pass over in silence the vital contributions they have made.¹ This

¹A few examples may suffice to illustrate the point. In his Short History of the Catholic Church (St. Louis, 1916), p. 290, Herman Wedewer, speaking about the African missions, mentions the White Fathers, the Jesuits and the Franciscans, but says nothing about the Spiritans. Konrad Algermissen in Christian Denominations (St. Louis, 1946), p. 145, speaks about the vicariates in South Africa and the Sudan, but omits to name the Two Guineas and the Zanguebar missions, although these two were the starting
injustice has been righted by more recent non-Spiritan scholars and in particular by Georges Goyau, the famous French Academician who devoted a generous measure of his limitless energy to vindicating the Spiritans' historical role in Africa through the publication of several works about their apostolic endeavors there.2

With respect to the Holy Ghost Fathers' position as pioneers in Africa, two elements demand particular emphasis: 1) under Libermann's vivifying impulse they were the first to undertake systematically the conversion of the Negroes and 2) they had no intention whatsoever of limiting their activities to the coast. Goyau fittingly combines both points in the following statement:

Before the African Missions of Lyons and the Missionaries of Verona, before the White Fathers of Africa and the Priests of the Sacred Heart of St. Quentin, before the Scheut Fathers, the Jesuits, and the Benedictines, the Spiritans were the first to make an effort toward spiritual penetration through the mysterious depths of the Dark Continent. In the Equatorial West it was Bessieux, Kobès, Le Berre, Carrie, Augouard; in the South-West it was Duparquet; in the South-East, it was Horner; in the Sudan, it was Jalabert (I mention only the dead).


As late as 1931 the Bulletin Général of the Congregation pointed out the abundant errors in scientific studies about the Church's missionary work and went on to observe ruefully: "After reading the numerous publications about Africa and its evangelization which have appeared this year, we are forced to admit that our part in this great work is unknown."

a. The Priority of the Spiritan Apostolate in Africa

This question of Spiritan priority must, of course, be viewed within a framework of proper qualifications. Of these there are three.

First of all, we are concerned here with the revival of missionary work in modern times. Anyone even superficially acquainted with Africa's religious history knows of the heroic efforts which the Jesuits, the Capuchins, and other religious orders made toward this end in former ages. But as Libermann regretfully pointed out in his famous memorandum, the work of these zealous apostles in Angola, Guinea, and elsewhere had come to nought by the nineteenth century. The old sixteenth-century Diocese of Angola still existed, but even its episcopal see had been vacant since 1826. Moreover, the subsequent resurgence of the Church there did not originate with the clergy of the diocese; it was sparked by the Holy Ghost Fathers who roamed far and wide through this ill-defined Portuguese colony.

Second, the Spiritans regard themselves as pioneers only in respect to the evangelization of Africa's Negro population. Before the advent of Libermann's priests in 1842, Africa above the
Sahara, i.e. Algeria, Morocco, Tunis, and Egypt, had four vicariates and one diocese. Then too, the Vicariate of the Cape of Good Hope had been staffed since 1837 by Irish secular clergy, although it must be noted that the few priests there\(^3\) limited their attention to caring for the scattered white settlers. Before 1850 the Negro population of South Africa was accorded scarcely any attention at all.

Finally, one must eliminate the earlier Vincentian effort among the Copts of Abyssinia, because the dangerous mission of five priests in this country had aimed at reconciling schismatic Christians with the Catholic Church and was not specifically pointed toward the conversion of pagans.

The Holy Ghost Fathers’ claim to priority, then, refers to modern and systematic missionary activity in Negro Africa. This Africa involves a geographical area inhabited by one hundred seventy million Negroes (about eighty-five per cent of the continent’s population) and covers nearly all of the territory south of the Sahara.

_Basis of the Claim._ It is sometimes mistakenly assumed that the Spiritan claim to priority is based on the old Prefecture of Senegal, where the first Holy Ghost Fathers arrived in 1779, and where they re-assumed responsibility in 1816 after the French Revolution. As we shall see, however, the work of the few priests in this Prefecture was limited for the most part to the French settlements of St. Louis and Gorée and precious little of it was devoted to evangelizing the native population. Rather, as the reader will have gathered from Chapter V, it is the mid-nineteenth century role played by Father Libermann and his priests in the Vicariate of the Two Guineas which entitles the Congregation to claim credit for pioneering in the revival of the African missions. Except for the two Irish-Americans, Bishop Barron and Father Kelly, who soon withdrew in despair, all the priests of the first expedition were members of Libermann’s society and, after the departure of the Americans, Libermann alone had the courage to continue the perilous mission without the assistance of any priests other than those of his own congregation. The Holy Ghost Fathers have never given up the great work Libermann inaugurated and they

\(^3\)The 1844 statistics indicate a total of ten priests for Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope. Seven of this number worked in Mauritius, leaving only three priests in the South African Vicariate.
are not likely to do so until Africa's Church is well-established with a native hierarchy and a native clergy, capable of carrying on without the assistance of foreign priests and religious.

It may be objected that in 1846 the Propaganda created the Vicariate of Central Africa and therefore Libermann's priests began their immense task just a few years before others came to share in the enterprise. In response to this, one must observe that Spiritan priority is based not only on time but on subsequent development. Anyone who has ever studied the history of the African missions will have been struck by the fact that the Vicariate of Central Africa failed to take root. It is hardly necessary to examine here the numerous factors which doomed the painful sacrifice of so many young lives in this mission to such a failure that the Vicariate showed no significant development prior to the twentieth century. Suffice it to say that no one can justly assign to it a primary role in reviving the African missions.

What about the labors of the Society of African Missions and the White Fathers of Africa—both of which are by their very nature dedicated to the conversion of Africa? As has been pointed out in Chapter VIII, Bishop Brésillac founded his Society of African Missions in 1856 and only three years later the first priests of this new congregation landed in Sierra Leone. When their first attempt failed, this mission returned to the jurisdiction of the Holy Ghost Fathers. It was 1861, eighteen years after the arrival of Libermann's spiritual sons on the West Coast, that the heroic efforts of the Society of African Missions succeeded in establishing a first permanent foothold in Dahomey. By then, the Spiritans had already sent more than a hundred men into the assault on the treacherous Dark Continent.

As to the White Fathers of Africa, their founder, Cardinal Lavigerie, had not yet entered the senior seminary when Libermann's first expedition set foot in Africa. It was only thirty-five years later, when the Holy Ghost Fathers had already started

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4 For the poignant story of the Central African Vicariate see M. B. Storme, Evangelisatiepogingen in de binnentalen van Afrika gedurende de XIXe eeuw, Brussels, 1951, pp. 138 ff.

5 Although the Holy Ghost Fathers use a large part of their available manpower for the spiritual conquest of Africa, their purpose is not connected with Africa as a matter of principle. As Libermann expressed it in one of his letters: "If fifty years hence the Negroes are all well cared for, what will prevent the missionaries from going then to the aid of another part of the Church which at that time will be the most abandoned and despised?"
their inland thrusts from the West above and below the Equator, and from the East through Zanzibar and Bagamoyo, that the first expedition of the White Fathers set out from a Spiritan mission for their daring push into the very heart of Africa.

We have insisted on the primacy of the Spiritan apostolate in Africa not from any vain motive of self-glorification, and still less to belittle the giant contributions of others, but simply to set the historical record straight. Missiological literature, especially of the cursory and popular sort, has all too often evinced a regrettable unawareness of the facts.

b. The Spiritan Drive Towards the Interior

While it may be less imperative to insist on the priority of the Holy Ghost Fathers' work in Africa than used to be the case before Georges Goyau made himself their historian, their chronicle must still be cleared of another misconception, viz., that they had no desire to penetrate the interior but preferred to cling to the coastal regions. At first glance, their mission territories may seem to confirm this impression: all of them, except two twentieth-century missions in the Belgian Congo and South Africa, are connected with the coast.

Nevertheless, this first impression is far from accurate. Once again, a non-Spiritan, Dr. Storme, has presented the facts objectively in a monumental study entitled: Evangelization Efforts in the Interior of Africa During the Nineteenth Century. In the following pages we will consider the Spiritan drive to the interior and the successes or failures which it encountered on the way. At least four starting points for such drives may be distinguished: from Senegal and Upper Guinea to West Sudan, from Zanzibar to East Equatorial Africa, from Landana on the west coast below the equator to West Equatorial Africa, and from Walvis Bay in South West Africa to Bechuanaland. This last we have already discussed in Chapters VIII and X and shall not refer to it here again.

The Drive from Senegal to West Sudan. The correspondence between Libermann and his first missionaries in the Two Guineas shows how all of them without exception were obsessed with the idea of plunging into the interior of Africa. The idea comes back

^M. B. Storme, Evangelisatiepogingen in de binnenlanden van Afrika gedurende de XIXe eeuw, Brussels, 1951.
again and again in their letters. The following are a few examples culled from such sources:

N. D. 4, 65

Once the missionaries are acclimatized, the Bishop will send them into the interior of these lands, according to the Good Lord's inspiration, as soon as he has acquired some experience of the country (Libermann, 1843).

N. D. 4, 489

The Superiors of the missions can give the missionaries permission to go into the interior to preach the word of God to the natives, on condition that they shall notify the colonial administrators . . . (Libermann's 1843 contract with the government regarding the establishment of missions).

N. D. 5, 261

If God wills, we should like very much therefore to go into the interior where, it seems, the people are more simple and easier to manage because of their isolation from foreign corruption (Fr. de Regnier, 1843).

N. D. 5, 270

If Jesus and Mary will, we shall try slowly to penetrate into the interior (Fr. Bouchet, 1844).

N. D. 5, 295

Father, speak about Gabon with the Jesuits and the Vincentians . . . They could go to the South and the North. And we, we would follow the river and proceed to the interior (Fr. Bessieux, 1845).

N. D. 5, 311

cf. A. P. F. 19,
105

See how the Good Lord has already opened a gate to advance towards the numerous tribes which through other tribesmen have commercial relations with peoples deep in the interior (Fr. Bessieux, 1845).

N. D. 7, 166

Slowly this community will acquire experience with the country; they will try to penetrate into the interior of the territory, find suitable sites there after awhile, and establish themselves in the area. (Fr. Libermann, 1845).

N. D. 9, 215

cf. N. D.
Compl. 88

We will begin by establishing ourselves solidly on the coasts. From there we will learn the country well, and once we are well-informed about the land, we will penetrate into the lands of the interior, where the most good is to be done (Fr. Libermann, 1847).

N. D. 11, 138

The Prefect of Senegal [Fr. Vidal] has manifested his desire to establish missions in the interior of the country at a distance of from a hundred and fifty to two hundred leagues [450 to 600 miles] from the coast, and our bishops of Guinea have the same view. (1849 report to the Propagation of the Faith.)
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These are but a few examples chosen from an almost inexhaustible supply of comparable statements in the correspondence of the early missionaries. They were not merely pious phrases and vague plans for a distant future. With feverish impatience Bishops Besieux and Kobes worked and travelled with their priests trying to find ways and means of going inland. As Dr. Storme points out, Libermann had to convince them that "the time was not yet ripe and that an effort to open the closed continent by a single powerful but unplanned stroke could endanger the very survival of the mission. For the future, the most important point was to establish first of all a firm bridgehead rather than waste the available manpower in a multiplicity of initiatives that were doomed to failure. Not even a solid phalanx of missionaries would have been able to conquer Africa for Christianity and civilization in a single all-out assault, for as yet there was no base of operations and it would have been irresponsible to risk the lives of many missionaries and of the mission itself by such impetuosity."

Experience proved that Libermann was wise in counselling restraint. Partial attempts at penetration constantly had to be given up as costly failures. By way of illustration, we will relate here a particularly daring effort—that of Father Arlabosse in 1850.

After several exploratory trips in which he "pushed inland to a distance of a hundred and sixty leagues from the coast as the crow flies" (about four hundred miles up the Senegal River) this intrepid Spiritan opened a mission at Bakel so that he might be "in communication with the tribes of Boundou, Bambou, Carta, Bambara, Timbuktu, etc." When Libermann informed the Propagation, it showed its "dissatisfaction" with such daring initiative, but it was too late to halt proceedings, for the mission had already been started.

Soon the six Spiritan priests and Brothers there found themselves holding out against terrific odds. The impossibility of maintaining adequate supply lines to the coast, the necessity of constant sentry duty to protect life and property against hostile tribesmen, and the heavy labor of constructing a permanent mission compound soon began to exact their toll. Within a year after his arrival, Father Arlabosse had to be carried to his grave. Three years later, a flood wrought havoc with the buildings and the mission had to be closed as a failure. It never did succeed in establishing contact with the Sudan.
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After this and similar experiences, these daring missionaries realized with sadness that their dream of pushing forward toward Timbuktu—the magic center of attraction for most of the early efforts at penetration—was not yet ripe for realization. They had to limit themselves to the only thing that was possible at the time: the preparation of a gradual and progressive thrust toward the interior. It was a wise decision, for when Cardinal Lavigerie's White Fathers began their drive inland to Timbuktu in 1876, their caravan had gone only a short distance before all its members were cruelly murdered. The same fate befell another expedition a few years later when it tried to reach the interior by a different route.

By then, however, the long-awaited moment for a spiritual penetration had arrived. French troops had gone into the region to put an end to the degrading slave-trade and to pacify the country generally. In the wake of these forces, the first contingent of four Spiritan Fathers and two Brothers finally was able in 1888 to undertake a safari to "that mysterious Sudan which for such a long time has been the object of our longings and desires." After two months of travel, the intrepid pioneers arrived at Kita, a distance of about eight hundred miles from the coast. After a friendly reception by the native population, the missionaries set to work constructing schools, workshops, dormitories and other installations of the typical Spiritan mission center. Although death struck fearful blows—three Fathers died within three years in a single residence—and a variety of perils still surrounded them, the mission steadily developed and the priests began to turn their attention another step further to the Wassulu lands beyond the Niger and to Nioro in the North. Meanwhile they started new missions at Kayes and Dinguira (1892) and made definite plans for pushing on to Timbuktu in the wake of the French forces.

However, the Spiritan drive in this direction was soon stopped short. In 1895, when this famous desert capital had fallen, Cardinal Lavigerie claimed the area as part of his jurisdiction and with the consent of the Propaganda added it to his Delegation of the Sahara and the Sudan.8

7One day the Fathers chuckled when they read in a French newspaper that their whole mission had been wiped out and its occupants barbarously murdered.
8Six years later, in an amicable exchange of territory, the Holy Ghost Fathers surrendered their three missions in the Sudan to the White Fathers and in return received the Issi lands in Guinea.

It is strange to read in Glenn D. Kittler's new book The White Fathers,
Penetration Attempts from the East. As Chapter VIII recorded, in 1860 Bishop Maupoint of Reunion had sent Father Fava to Zanzibar to start a Catholic mission there. Fava’s plan was to use this first center as the starting point from which “one day we will go to raise an altar for Christ in the heart of Africa.” Two years later, the Holy Ghost Fathers went to work in the Zanzibar Prefecture which stretched along two thousand miles of coast-line from Cape Guardafui near Arabia to the Zambezi River in the south, without limits to the interior. Father Horner, the Superior and the great pioneer of this mission, eagerly took over his predecessor’s plans for penetration. He decided to follow the traditional Spiritan method of first founding a few central missions to educate children in the Christian way of life and then use these youngsters to establish advanced Christian villages farther inland.

After the Zanzibar foundation, the first of these central missions was founded at Bagamoyo (1868). Despite famine, tornadoes, epidemics and opposition, Bagamoyo quickly developed and brought considerable fame to the humble missionaries. Nevertheless, they quickly realized that coastal missions offered little hope for the future. As they recorded in the minutes of their Chapter of 1870:

“Zanzibar and Bagamoyo have importance only as preparatory works or procures to facilitate the foundation of other stations. Taken in themselves neither of these two missions has any future.”

As early as 1869, therefore, Father Horner was already making plans to draw Unyamwezi into the sphere of his influence, even

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New York, 1957, p. 216, that when Cardinal Lavigerie’s priests arrived in St. Louis, Senegal, in 1894, the Holy Ghost Fathers had limited their Sudan ministry mostly to “Catholic Frenchmen” and that “no schools had been built, no hospitals, no orphanages, nothing had been done about slavery.”

The periodic reports of the Spiritan missions in the Sudan at Kayes, Donguira and Kita constantly speak about their ransoming of slaves, their schools, their orphanage, and the agricultural education of the children.

When the Spiritans surrendered these missions to Bishop Bazin of the White Fathers in 1901, the prelate was very much impressed by the flourishing condition of the three stations the Congregation passed on to him. The last Spiritan report of the Sudan missions (1901) noted “that for the past four or five years they were self-sufficient, the buildings were finished, the installations almost completed, and the government grants joined to the fruit of their agricultural and other works allowed them to live without any outside support.” The most recently published record of this area (now the Prefecture of Kayes) reveals that, after the Spiritans left, no new missions were established in this territory until half a century later (1950), despite the fact that nearly four hundred thousand non-Moslem Africans still remain to be evangelized there. In view of these facts, one cannot escape the feeling that Kittler has taken unpardonable liberties with history.
Two Spiritan pioneers of the Two Guineas: Bishop John Remigius Bessieux (left) and Bishop Aloysius Kobès (right).
Three Spiritan pioneers of the Zanguebar Mission (East Africa): Father Anthony Horner (center), Father Etienne Baur (left), Father Charles Gommenginger (right).
though it took three months of trekking to get to it. The ambitious nature of his plan appears from the statement of an Arabian African explorer which Father Horner loved to repeat: "If your Zanguebar mission can maintain its present flourishing condition, your successors will go straight through Africa to join hands with their confreres in the Congo."

B. G. 8, 771 ff. Before undertaking a mission so far removed from their center, the Spiritans decided early in 1870 to start one in the Ukami region at a distance of from seven to eleven days' travel from Bagamoyo. However, when they returned from their exploratory trip to make final preparations for the new post, these French Fathers heard to their dismay how the disastrous Franco-Prussian War had ravaged their country. It meant that they could no longer count on financial support from home. Instead of being able to penetrate further, they now had to reduce their existing works and devote all their energies to maintaining the most important of their establishments.

B. G. 11, 125 ff.; 730 ff. It was not until 1877 that a mission farther inland could be founded at Mhonda, a distance of about eight days' march from Bagamoyo. Lack of resources prevented Father Horner from going farther into the continent. In deep sadness he wrote: "If the Catholic missionaries are not going into the interior, to Uganda, Unyamwezi, and other places, to found new missions there, it is because they do not have the funds. It would take hundreds of thousands of francs, and they have barely enough to keep alive and maintain their modest establishments." While the Protestant Churches spent enormous sums in their efforts to penetrate Africa's interior, lack of money reduced the Catholic missions to mere planning.

Storme, 414, ff. The Spiritans, however, were not the only ones who made ambitious plans for reaching the heart of Africa. In the Vicariate of Central Africa (Khartum), Bishop Comboni had been doing exactly the same as the Holy Ghost Fathers—biding his time until it was opportune to plunge into the inner depths of the continent. It was a dream to which he had dedicated his whole life, and by 1877 the long-awaited moment was at hand. In the same year, Father Planque, Superior General of the Society of African Missions, formulated similar plans and asked the Propaganda to entrust Equatorial Africa to his Congregation. Finally, there was the influential Cardinal Lavigerie who composed a
secret memorandum, also in 1877, asking the Propaganda to create four new vicariates in the interior and restrict all coastal missions to a maximum of five hundred kilometers (about 300 miles) in depth. These vicariates, he pleaded, should be placed under the central authority of a competent person. Although he did not mention names, his biographer Baunard observes that he would not have been loath to accept the position for himself.

As a result of the Cardinal’s prestige, the Propaganda authorized him in 1878 to undertake the evangelization of Africa’s inner regions around Nyanza and Tanganyika Lakes. This decision dashed the hopes of the Society of African Missions and it crushed the life-long ambition of Bishop Comboni.\(^9\) As for the Holy Ghost Fathers, they were suddenly cut off from the interior just as they had been in West Sudan. Although Father Horner and his confreres welcomed the White Fathers in Bagamoyo and aided them in preparing their caravans for the trek to the interior, their joy was mingled with sadness for, as Father Horner expressed it, “the evangelization of the interior had always been the dream of his life.”

The Push to Equatorial Africa from the West. Chapter X described the early efforts of the Holy Ghost Fathers in the territory which later became the Belgian Congo. To avoid repetition we shall not enter into this matter again beyond a brief indication of penetration plans and results. By 1885 they had reached the Equator at the spot now occupied by Coquilhatville, about seven hundred miles up the Congo River. Their intentions were even more daring for, at the foundation of Boma (1880) they had said that this would be “the gateway to the interior of Africa” and added: “we will stop only when we meet our confreres of Zanguebar on the Nyanza and Tanganyika Lakes, [although] undoubtedly many years will pass before that happy day will come.”

We have already noted in Chapter IX how Cardinal Lavigerie tried to reserve the interior of the French Congo for his own control in 1885 and how the Holy See finally settled the issue in favor of the Spiritans by creating the Vicariate of the French Congo. This decision gave the Holy Ghost Fathers a vicariate stretching from the West Coast of Africa to the borders of the

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\(^9\) He died three years later in Khartum, shortly before the Madhi revolt in the Sudan annihilated his mission.
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Three years later, Father Angouard became Vicar Apostolic of the inner part of the immense territory. His domain stretched along the Congo for about 1300 miles and was soon extended northward to the borders of Libya.

Starting from Brazzaville, to which the former Spiritan station of Kuamouth had been transferred in 1887, Augouard set out to build a network of stations along the rivers. With boundless energy and speed—his native nickname was Diata-Diata (Quick-Quick)—he went to work. To facilitate travel, he bought a whaling boat in Europe, had it cut into pieces of about seventy pounds each, and transported it on the heads of carriers to Brazzaville. He and his confreres then laboriously reassembled the vessel and christened it the Leo XIII in honor of the then reigning Pontiff.10 Rushing up and down the rivers with a floating but ever-changing community, the already legendary Bishop founded inter alia the missions of Liranga, Francerville, Bangui and Bessu, which were 750, 1000, 1100, and 1300 miles from Brazzaville respectively, and some were in openly cannibalistic territory.

Meanwhile, other Spiritans in Gabon went up the Ogowe River and founded a mission at Lambarene (1881). After travelling by water for forty-three days, and making an exploratory trip to the Alima River, they partially retraced their steps and established another mission at Lastourville. These explorations were made possible because passages to the interior had just been discovered by de Brazza and other famous explorers who were often accompanied in their travels by Holy Ghost Fathers.

All this sufficiently shows that the Spiritans had no intention whatsoever of limiting themselves to coastal areas. If it had not been for the fact that Cardinal Lavigerie’s vicariates restricted them to the coast in East Africa, they would most likely have realized their dream of joining hands with their confreres who were penetrating from the West.

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The following two sections of this chapter will be dedicated to a study of the means employed by the Holy Ghost Fathers in their

10In 1896 the vessel was replaced by a larger steam boat. It too was brought to Brazzaville on the heads of a caravan of six hundred carriers. Finally, in 1908, a third steamer, the Pius X replaced the second Leo XIII.
apostolic assault on Africa. While these sections bear an intimate relationship to Father Libermann's missionary doctrine as expounded in Chapter VII, it may not be amiss to point out here that Libermann imposed no rigidly determined "system" on his priests. Any idea of a fixed pattern would have been totally foreign to his method of doing things, for he considered "the system" as positively dangerous when one is dealing with concrete human situations. In 1847, he sent the following urgent plea to Father Arragon in Dakar:

N. D. 9, 43 f.

I am asking you only one thing and I must insist on the point: do not form any determined and fixed plans. The time has not yet come to formulate an absolute and determined method. I do not mean that we should not have a general plan, for obviously, as we are all agreed, we need one, but it would be dangerous to commit oneself irrevocably to that plan and to its details. It is good and important to have some practical ideas on those details, but we must be flexible enough to modify and change, if necessary, the way of implementing the plan and its elements. Experience will be our teacher.

Engel, 286

This openness to experience as advocated by Father Libermann is the main reason why the apostolate of the Congregation shows a "very pronounced trend of development . . . , an elaboration of firm directives after many years of experience, often after great and heroic personal and material sacrifices, diligent study and numerous bitter disappointments."

3. INDIRECT MEANS OF APOSTOLATE

As we saw in Chapter VII, Father Libermann put great stress on civilization as a preparation for the establishment of native Churches in Africa. To raise people from a state of crude savagery to a supernatural Christian life it was necessary first to teach them how to be human, for the life of grace is built on the substructure of man's natural abilities and achievements. The Spiritan Bishop Carrie expressed it thus: "We will first of all make human beings of these poor savages and only then Christians."

For this reason the missionaries of the Congregation have always paid great attention to everything that would be conducive to the civilization of Africa and thus indirectly serve the supreme purpose of their labors. In subsequent pages we will briefly consider
these indirect means by which they laid the natural foundation for a truly African Church:

a. Economic activity;
b. Educational endeavors;
c. Charitable enterprises;
d. Scientific work;
e. Catholic press and youth organizations.\(^{11}\)

### a. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Engel, 116 ff. Emphasis. Dr. Joseph Schmidlin, the well-known professor of missiology and mission history, does not hesitate to say that the magnitude and steady development of the economic side of their apostolate has always been one of “the most striking characteristics of the Holy Ghost Fathers.” The reason for this phenomenon must be sought in the fact that Father Libermann himself had placed so much emphasis on it, as has been sufficiently pointed out when we considered his missionary theory. The early Constitutions of the Congregation put great stress on the point:

1878 ed., Constitution 96, X

Although the missionaries’ special purpose is the salvation of souls, they must take great care to do their share in promoting a well-planned civilization and the temporal interests of the peoples whose conversion is entrusted to them, by inspiring them with an esteem and love for work and by teaching them, with the aid of the Brothers, planned agriculture and the most useful arts and crafts.\(^{12}\)

The Spiritan emphasis on economic development is motivated mainly by two principles: the value of work as a factor in moral training and the material and financial advantages flowing from it. Regarding the first, we may quote just one from the innumerable observations missionaries have made in this respect:

B. G. 26, 822 cf. A.P.F. 38, 33 f.

For us, material work is a very effective means to provide moral training for the children entrusted to us, to educate them, to form them in a Christian and Catholic way of life,

\(^{11}\)The preparation of this and the following sections of this chapter has been greatly simplified by the outstanding study of Dr. Alois Engel, C.S.Sp., *Die Missionsmethode der Missionare v. heiligen Geist auf dem afrikanischen Festland*, Knechtsteden, 1932, pp. XII and 296.

\(^{12}\)In later editions of the Constitutions much material has been omitted and incorporated in the *Spiritual Directory* and the *Missionary Directory*. 
to inspire them, if not with a sincere and unselfish love of work—in his present condition the Negro is hardly capable of that—at least with a realization that it is necessary to work and to exert oneself in order to gain an honest living and to shake off the habit of parasitism which is so widespread in the tropics and which engenders nothing but injustice, idleness and corruption.

The second principle (that of material and financial advantages) is graphically illustrated in a report from the Lambarene mission in Gabon:

B. G. 25, 416

Everyone here works as hard as possible, but we have to gain our daily bread . . . for our problem is how to feed, dress, maintain and care for, all through the three hundred sixty-five days of the year, fourteen Europeans and two hundred children and apprentices; how to feed, house, support and modestly pay our thirty-two catechists on the allocation of 6,700 francs which we annually receive from the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood.

B. G. 2, 490;
3, 130; 21,
510; 26, 84

On occasion also, there were additional reasons stemming from a desire to induce nomadic tribes to settle down, to alleviate economic distress, and to prevent neo-Christians from losing their Faith under Mohammedan masters.

Plantations and Agriculture. The development of the agricultural resources of the land has always been a typical aspect of Spiritan residences in Africa. Obviously so, for this approach most graphically illustrates the age-old Christian principle of life: Pray and Work. As Dr. Engel expresses it:

Engel, 127

Nearly everywhere we find the same picture: a mission begins on a small scale, its means are modest, but the missionaries' delight in work and their confidence in God are great indeed. In an astonishing way the station grows up: gardens with new vegetables and fruit trees never seen before by a tropical sky, long lines of orchards with well-kept fruit-laden trees, extensive and alluring plantations of cotton, coffee, and coconuts lie as a flowering crown around a mission which, to the surprise of the natives, has now grown into a small village with a church, schools, workshops, a hospital and similar institutions.
It would be tedious to enumerate all the missions which exemplify economic development in this way. We shall restrict ourselves therefore to a few examples: the agricultural settlement of Ngazobil, which in two years' time saw five villages arise on its lands; the tree nurseries and vegetable gardens of Thiès, Libreville's famous coconut and vanilla groves, Mayumba's banana plantations, Landa's cornfields and superb flower gardens, Catoco's golden wheat culture, Huila's flourishing vineyards, Morogoro's famous coffee plantations which for many years supplied the imperial household of Kaiser Wilhelm in Germany, Mandera's cotton fields and rubber forests, Serabu's cola plants and date palms, and Bahi's cattle farms. In most cases, this economic activity developed into sizeable agricultural enterprises. For instance, the wheat culture alone in Catoco gave work to a hundred people. Like the medieval monks who civilized Europe, the Fathers and Brothers drained swamps, cleared forests, built roads, constructed bridges and installed irrigation systems. In many instances they successfully introduced hitherto unknown species. For example, in the arid Sudan at Kayes, Spiritan Brothers managed to grow "most of the European vegetables" and at Kita their orchards abounded in such "unknown fruits" as oranges, mangoes, lemons, cinnamon, and several others.

Special mention must be made here of Father Theophilus Klaine who, during the forty-seven years he spent in Gabon, devoted all his spare time to botanical and agricultural studies. "Without any exaggeration or fear of contradiction, it used to be said that between Libreville and the Niger no one ate a cultivated mango, a choice banana, a juicy pineapple or sapodilla which was not the fruit of his unremitting labor." He also interested Europe in aukoume, a resinous kind of wood that makes an excellent veneer, and subsequently it became a major export item from forest-covered Equatorial Africa.

The vast scale on which these pioneers managed to conduct their agricultural enterprises with such primitive means caused the early African travellers—whether Catholic or not—to gaze in admiration. The mission of Bagamoyo was made world-famous by the praises bestowed on its plantations by Stanley, Baker, Serpa, Pinto, Emin Pascha, Baumann and Bartle Frere. The Sultan of Zanzibar himself told Father Horner, the Superior of the Zanguebar mission: "You are the man who has made Bagamoyo. Formerly
it was a poor unkempt village. Today it is an important city—thanks to the impulse you have given to the development of plantations.\footnote{13} A complete and definitive study of the economic impact of Spiritan agricultural enterprises has yet to be made. It will amply demonstrate how simple missionaries with almost no means at their command can go a long way toward achieving goals for which modern philanthropy and Point Four Programs must spend huge sums of money.

Even among the Spiritan pioneers in Africa, it is true, a few dissident voices were raised in protest at first against this emphasis on the economic approach. For instance, Father Bessieux claimed in 1846 that this sort of work might be suitable for Trappist monks but not for missionaries, and that the moralizing influence Libermann attributed to work did not find confirmation in experience. However, by 1856 his own further experience had converted him so thoroughly that Libreville—his residence—became an outstanding example of the economic approach. Meanwhile he had been named Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of the Two Guineas. Despite his episcopal dignity, he had no misgivings about going out every day with pick-axe and shovel to work side by side with the mission boys in clearing the land and preparing it for plantations. It was an effective reply to the complaint registered by some parents that he was a slave-driver who made their children work but refused to touch a tool himself.

No doubt the reader is wondering what the Holy Ghost Fathers have done with the great wealth that undoubtedly must have resulted from all this civilizing but productive labor. The answer is very simple: not a penny of it has gone to swell their own coffers. All of it and a good deal more has been spent in maintaining in Africa a field force that now amounts to about 1,500 Spiritans, 3,000 Sisters, and an army of 40,000 teachers, instructors and catechists, as well as in constructing and supporting 17,000 schools, 400 hospitals and dispensaries, 150 orphanages, innumerable churches and Christian villages, and caring in a multiplicity of ways for the sick, the poor and the outcast.

\textit{Technical Schools and Workshops.} Trade-schools and workshops to teach the various arts and crafts by which people can

\footnote{13}In later years Bagamoyo lost most of its importance to the new harbor city of Dar es Salaam.
raise themselves to a standard of relative well-being have, in line with Father Libermann's recommendations, always featured prominently in the Spiritan apostolate. It is in these schools and shops that the Holy Ghost Brothers have made their most marvelous contribution to the conversion of Africa.

Engel, 122 ff. As early as 1852, a rather well-equipped technical school began to function in the Senegambia mission. It comprised divisions for woodworking, tailoring, shoemaking and printing. Following this example, most subsequent Spiritan residences in Africa undertook to introduce civilization in similar fashion by means of arts and crafts. Among the most important of these early technical schools were Ngazobil\(^{13}\) (Senegal), Boke (Sierra Leone), Onitsha (Nigeria), Libreville (Gabon), Huila (Angola), Simonsdale (Kenya), Bagamoyo, and Zanzibar. Some of these became quite famous, as for example, the establishment at Onitsha which, under the expert direction of Brother Armand, was flooded with orders from the British government; the one at Zanzibar, where the Brother-Director became the private technical advisor of his Royal Highness the Sultan; the center at Huila which, as early as in 1892, had sections for woodworking, tailoring, brickmaking, tanning, shoemaking, brewing, printing, a sawmill, a water mill, and soon added weaving to its list.

The purpose of all these technical schools and workshops was clearly expressed in 1857 in a report on the new school in Gambia:

B. G. 1, 137

"This work is economically a blessing for the land, a good source of income for the support of the mission, and a powerful factor in the religious regeneration of the people."

In general, the results achieved by these schools fulfilled every expectation. For instance, in 1907 Nigeria reported not only that its workshops were famous, but also that they produced the best Christians. This does not mean that everything went always perfectly and without failures. At times too many of the boys loved freedom and idleness and occasionally there were reports of strikes and revolt against the discipline involved in learning a trade, which not even the threat of expulsion could counteract. It would have

\(^{13}\) It is interesting to note here that, from 1887 on, the mechanical shops of Ngazobil operated under the direction of Brother Fulgentius Defrance, a former railroad engineer of the Paris-Dieppe line. This ninety-two year old pioneer recently celebrated the seventieth anniversary of his arrival in Africa and recalled the days when the mission shops functioned as a Department of Public Works for the entire colony.
been surprising if such things had not happened. After all, they occur even in places where civilization has held sway for centuries.

In more recent times, the technical schools of many missions have been severely handicapped by the shortage of Brothers. While in some places it has been possible to replace them by trained African craftsmen, others have been forced to abandon this type of training. The latest statistics (1955-56) reveal, however, that there are two hundred and seventeen technical schools still functioning, even though eleven Spiritan dioceses in Africa no longer have a single one.

b. Educational Endeavors

The importance Father Libermann attached to schools in civilizing and Christianizing Africa need not be stressed here again. Chapter VII has covered his views on the subject. Those ideas found an echo in the 1878 edition of the Constitutions, which went on to urge the missionaries "to pay special attention to the children of chiefs and other leading personalities of the land so that later on their influence might be put to use for the benefit of the people."

These various directives emanating from the supreme authorities in the Congregation did not fall on deaf ears, for a constantly recurrent theme in the reports from the Spiritan missions in Africa was and is: "The schools are a work to which we give top priority."

Apart from the technical schools which have been considered above and the seminaries for future priests which we will study later, the educational institutions in the African missions of the Holy Ghost Fathers may be classified as bush schools, standard grade schools, secondary schools, and colleges. In addition to these one must note the recent efforts to establish Catholic universities in Africa.

Bush Schools and Grade Schools. Generally speaking, the bush schools limit themselves to teaching the elements of religion, reading, writing and arithmetic, and all these subjects are taught in the native language. Nearly every mission residence has a large number of such one-room schools scattered throughout the more remote areas of its territory. They are visited regularly by the Fathers, but all instruction is given by catechists or lay
teachers who generously sacrifice the inducements of more lucrative jobs in more attractive surroundings in order to devote their lives to the interests of the mission. Their salary is meager—barely sufficient to cover their basic needs. Although such schools are quite primitive and never aspire to high scholastic attainment, they are very efficient tools in raising the masses of backward areas to an elementary level of civilization and in spreading Christian influence.

The standard grade schools function in more heavily populated areas. Usually, their program follows the requirements laid down by the civil authorities and normally includes the study of one European language. In many places, notably in the British and Portuguese colonies, these mission schools are supported in whole or in part by the government. They are staffed for the most part by African teachers and supervised by Holy Ghost Fathers. The total number of both bush and standard grade schools in Spiritan missions throughout Africa runs very high: latest statistics show a total of 15,925, and this number is augmented by 946 others in insular Africa.

Secondary Schools and Colleges. As modern civilization progressed and created a need for Africans capable of staffing governmental, industrial, and commercial offices, secondary schools and colleges began to multiply quickly. There are now no less than two hundred sixty-seven of them in the Spiritan missions of continental Africa and an additional eighty-seven on adjacent islands. Moreover, large numbers of teacher-training colleges had to be founded so that mission schools might be staffed with competent personnel that was capable of handling the surging flood of African youngsters in quest of knowledge. The Catholic schools of the Spiritan dioceses in Onitsha and Owerri alone absorb more than eight thousand lay teachers. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that the missions of the Holy Ghost Fathers count a hundred and five such pedagogical institutes in Africa.

The University Level. Recently this educational advance in the Spiritan missions has received additional impetus. After the Second World War, the Apostolic Delegate of Mombasa and the Bishops of Tanganyika Territory decided that the time had come to make preparations for a Catholic University of East Africa. For this reason, they established a new educational center at
Pugu in the Archdiocese of Dar-es-Salaam and the Irish Province of the Holy Ghost Fathers agreed to staff it. St. Francis Xavier College, as it will be known until it reaches university level, opened its doors in 1950 for one hundred top level students from all over Tanganyika. Then too, across the continent in the Spiritan Archdiocese of Onitsha (Nigeria), similar steps have been taken to create a Catholic University. Because the Holy Ghost Fathers there are already burdened with a dozen colleges, they have asked American Jesuits to staff this new educational venture.

Religious Value. In terms of religious well-being, many missions owe their flourishing condition to the care they have lavished on their educational programs. In Southern Nigeria, for instance, Bishop Shanahan’s development of an extensive school system between 1906 and 1918 “literally changed the face of the earth.” The Fathers there realized that “to neglect education in Nigeria would have meant to lose all our Catholic influence and this within a few years.” It is largely due to the enlightened educational policy of this bishop and his successors that the Spiritan missions of Onitsha and Owerri now rank among the very best in the world, numbering nearly 700,000 Catholics and 250,000 catechumens out of a total population of about four and a half million.

Generally speaking, Catholic education has developed better in English territories than in the French colonies. The reason for this is not hard to determine. In contrast to the intelligent British colonial policy of normally working hand in hand with the missions and supporting even religious schools so that the country might develop more rapidly, French authorities in the past often evinced open hostility to Catholic education and thereby forced the missions to rely on their own meager resources for the maintenance of their schools. Fortunately, this situation has improved in the last twenty-five years and has changed notably since the beginning of World War II.

c. Charitable Enterprises

Importance. As could be expected of a Congregation which addresses itself especially to the poor and the abandoned, charitable endeavors have always figured prominently among the means that the Spiritans have used to further the establishment of God’s King-
School buildings in tropical style at the Spiritan missions of Kindu (Belgian Congo), Quipeo (Angola), and Dakar (Senegal).
The beautiful church of Ankoro (Belgian Congo), built by Father Elsander in 1922.
General Features of the Spiritan Apostolate in Africa

D. C. 535

Engel, 134; cf. B. G. 16, 294

dom on earth. Libermann instructed his priests to be “the protectors, supports and defenders of the weak and the humble against all their oppressors.” As a result, “in nearly all missions the Spiritans inaugurated their activity by works of charity. More than any other means, the care of orphans, the poor, the sick and the lepers made them gain the hearts of the Negroes, caused them to win their entire confidence, and thus rendered easier the salvation of the abandoned and enslaved pagan souls which at first often involved distrust and hatred.”

Care for the Sick. Without hesitation, the priests, the Brothers, and the valiant Sisters who assisted them in their heroic task, devoted themselves to the sick when dangerous epidemics struck. To give but one example: in Senegambia recurrent yellow fever plagues during 1866 killed nine, during 1867 fifteen, and during 1900 nine of the missionaries who ignored personal risk in caring for the dying victims of this dread disease. For the sick bereft of all attention and for helpless slaves who had managed to escape from their cannibalistic owners, the Fathers opened asylums and “freedom villages.” Special care was devoted to the miseries of leprosy long before colonial governments awoke to the problem. Even now, most recent statistics show that Spiritan missions on the African continent still care for thirty-three leper colonies.

Nearly all of the assistance given the sick is channelled through dispensaries and small hospitals attached to the various mission stations. These provide extensive service. In 1956 alone, more than four million patients had recourse to the four hundred and twenty-one dispensaries and hospitals maintained by the Spiritan missions of Africa. While the figure is certainly impressive, it should not lead one to think that the Holy Ghost Fathers in Africa devote all their time to corporal works of mercy or that they operate large hospitals in the American style. The mere fact that these four hundred and twenty-one dispensaries and hospitals accommodate only 2,380 beds should dispel any such notion. Lack of resources and qualified personnel make it impossible to build and operate hospitals as we know them. Moreover, missionaries enter the medical field only as a means to an end. They strive to alleviate the sufferings of their fellow-men insofar as their abilities permit, but they would be untrue to their calling if they concentrated on practicing the corporal works of mercy to the detriment of their prime objective, viz, the establishment of an African
Engel, 142

Church, ruled by an African hierarchy and served by African priests. In the absence of competent medical help, the missionary frequently offers his services, but he does so to avail himself of the opportunity to dispense spiritual advice along with bodily care. A recurrent theme, therefore, in the periodic reports from Spiritan missions is that large numbers of the sick under their care have asked for baptism before death or returned subsequently for religious instruction.

Engel, 156 ff.
1878 ed., Constitution 96, X

Liberation of Slaves. The 1878 edition of the Constitutions impressed on the missionaries their duty “to fight slavery and above all the shameless slave trade... to redeem as many as possible of these poor slaves, especially the children, so that they can be educated in a Christian way.” During the first decades of their existence, most of the early Spiritan boarding-schools in the missions were filled in great part with former slave children. Since popular indignation against the ignominy of slavery had swept over Europe, the Propaganda was able to allocate large sums of money for the redemption of slaves. The Bagamoyo mission alone bought three hundred and nineteen of them between 1884 and 1888, and another three hundred in 1893 and 1894. Similar programs of redemption obtained in other missions.

Nonetheless, the purchase of these slaves did not always proceed without difficulty. In Senegambia, the local governor accused the Fathers of trafficking in slaves and forced them temporarily to reduce their purchases until the ridiculous complaint could be disposed of. Things were different on the East Coast, where the British authorities looked with favor on the Fathers’ activities and frequently assigned to them entire human cargoes of captured slave-trading vessels.

Engel, 157

It may not be superfluous to point out here that in many parts of Africa slavery was not primarily a source of cheap labor. Rather, it was calculated to provide victims for the ritual of human sacrifice and to supply cannibalistic cooking-pots with the much-prized “talking meat.” Tender bodies of children were regarded as an especial delicacy. After their capture, these innocent pawns of barbarism were fattened up and then driven like cattle to a marketplace that was always full of buyers. Anyone who could not afford a whole body always had a chance to combine his purchase with that of others. He simply drew a line around the portion he pre-
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...ferred and then waited for the chosen piece until the rest was sold.\textsuperscript{14} As late as 1905, Spiritan missionaries in Ubangi reported that such cannibalistic slave-trading was still a common occurrence in their neighborhood.

The incredulous reader who is not acquainted with the depth of barbarism which engulfed Africa until the beginning of the present generation may be inclined to consider cannibalism as a rather exceptional occurrence. The correspondence of the missionaries, however, leaves no doubt about its common acceptance.\textsuperscript{15} Nowadays the barbaric custom has largely disappeared, thanks to the stern repressive measures of colonial governments and the moralizing influence of the missions. Throughout their establishments, the Spiritans purchased as many slave children as possible, lodged them in orphanages in the mission compounds, gave them a careful Christian education, and taught them agriculture or a trade. Once such children had grown up, the priests settled them in special “freedom villages” and in the earlier days such villages often constituted the only Christian enclaves in otherwise fully pagan areas. In this way they made their contribution toward eradicating this vicious, demoralizing practice.

\textsuperscript{14}To tenderize the tough flesh of adult slaves, cannibals used to break their bones and soak the victims alive in water for several hours.

\textsuperscript{15}The following examples may show how deeply engrained the custom was. One day a Congo mission adopted a boy whose father had been killed fighting against the French. The boy told one of the priests: “Him commander big fool. My father big fat chief, but commander make hole in ground and let him rot. Why not feast on all that fine meat?” Convinced by a missionary that bigamy was illicit, a chief told the priest that he had only one wife now, the best of the two. “Did you send away the other one?” he was asked. “No, I ate her,” he replied. Then too, it was common practice to cook prisoners of war and even to dispatch the sick before they would be too emaciated to adorn the table.

In 1877, Father Horner, the founder of Zanguebar mission, wrote about a tribe residing in the interior:

Recently I met some cannibals in Bagamoyo who, at least in their own country, eat nothing but human flesh. . . . These natives are called Mamiama, that is, flesh- or man-eaters. . . . I have been unable to ascertain the geographical position of their country.

In Nigeria, Bishop Shanahan reported similar conditions. As late as 1912 he wrote: “Every adult in this country has tasted human flesh, and . . . we live in the midst of cannibals. . . . As we go through the towns . . . we see human bones, and in particular human skulls, piled high in the court-yards before the chairs of state used by the chiefs. So traffic in human flesh still goes on. . . . Today the principal slave trade is with children of school age, and the chief traffickers in human flesh—the Arocukus—have fomented revolts at Okidja, Afikpo, and Owerri.”
Ransoming of Slaves and the Purpose of the Missions. At first blush, the redemption of slaves and the religious education of ransomed captives seems to need no defense. Nevertheless, one may legitimately raise the question whether the large-scale efforts made in this direction did not constitute more of a hindrance than a help in establishing the African Catholic Church. The story of the Spiritan missions in Southern Nigeria under Bishop Joseph Shanahan provide at least a partial answer to the question.

The Antislavery Society had collected enormous sums for ransoming and educating slaves, and the Propaganda then allocated these to various missions on the basis of their needs. By way of satisfying the intention of the donors, it specified that this money was to be used for the purpose for which it had been given. Rigorous adherence to the ideas of the well-intentioned contributors, however, meant that the missionaries had to spend most of their time caring for a few thousand former slaves and leaving nearly all the free population unattended. At the same time, by African standards these slaves constituted the dregs of humanity. How could one hope, therefore, to use them in forming the nucleus of a Church which one day would pervade the masses?

To remain faithful to the supreme purpose of missionary work and to solidly establish the Church in Nigeria, Bishop Shanahan maintained, one had to concentrate on the free population and remake them into a Christian people. This method would counteract slavery all the more effectively because it would destroy the evil in its very root. For this reason, he proposed to use the anti-slavery funds to establish a large-scale system of schools for both free and slave children, for “those who hold the school, hold the country, hold its religion, hold its future.” This view was opposed by the Propaganda, not because that august body disagreed with the Bishop, but because its hands were tied by donors of anti-slavery funds who had specified that the money be used for the ransom and education of slaves. After a long exchange of correspondence, the Propaganda silently tolerated the Bishop’s more efficient use of these monies, especially after he declared that he would rather lose the subsidies than revert to the old system.

His own method of approach proved its effectiveness by the splendid results it achieved in a few years’ time. If present-day Southern Nigeria is a country in which the Church has been solidly established, which offers great hope for the future, and in which
Human Sacrifice, as it was formerly practiced in Africa.
(Courtesy Missions Catholiques, vol. 10, p. 475.)

Human Sacrifice to the God of War.
(Courtesy Missions Catholiques, vol. 10, p. 487.)
Father William Jouga, C.S.Sp., 1841-1875, one of the first African priests of the Congregation.
(Courtesy Missions Catholiques, vol. 8, p. 162.)

His Excellency Thomas Mongo, First African Bishop of Duala (French Cameroons).
slavery has nearly disappeared, a great part of the credit for this happy state of affairs must be attributed to Bishop Shanahan. At the same time, events in Nigeria show how Europe's over-emotional concern with the wretched practice of slavery seriously threatened the development of the Church in Africa. Father Daigre, C.S.Sp., in his book, *Oubangui-Chari*, indicates that the situation was not confined to Nigeria: “We were quickly forced to realize that it may be humanitarian to ransom slaves, but the idea of building a society upon them and the belief that a country can be Christianized by converting them is wholly absurd.”

**d. Scientific Work**

In evaluating the scientific work of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Africa, one should keep in mind the principle by which missionaries are governed when they engage in such activities. It was very clearly stated in 1874 when the Congregation was asked to impress on its missionaries the importance of scientific contributions:

> Our main purpose, and therefore the one to which we should consecrate all our efforts, consists in the evangelization and the salvation of souls. Compared with this, the rest can only be something accessory and of secondary importance. Nevertheless, we must not remain indifferent to the interests of science nor is there any reason why we should not be occupied with them to a certain extent... Moreover, among these endeavors there are some, such as linguistic studies, which readily fall within the scope of desirable occupations that contribute to the success of the apostolic ministry.

Within the limits of this restriction, many Spiritans have added mightily to our knowledge of the Dark Continent and its inhabitants, particularly in the fields of geography, natural history, ethnology and philology. A detailed examination of this scientific work would lie outside the intent of this book, for it would be of interest only to specialists in the field. We shall limit ourselves therefore to a few of the more significant items.

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10 Our consideration here will be strictly limited to scientific work in Africa. Accordingly, we will make no reference e.g. to the excellent studies published by Father Tastevin about Indian ethnology and languages, or the scholarly achievements of Holy Ghost Fathers in Europe and America.
The Spiritans

**Geography.** As could be expected, geographical contributions date from those early days when large sections of Africa were still unknown. Most outstanding undoubtedly are the fifty-five maps by which Bishop Augouard and other Spiritans charted large sections of the upper Congo and Ubangi Rivers for the first time. Basing themselves on fifteen years of experience in navigating these rivers, and preparing their maps "in accord with the best astronomical and cartographical methods," the Fathers reached results which were so satisfactory that the geographical society of Paris granted them the Fournier Prize and the government did the printing at its own expense. Other Holy Ghost Fathers designed charts of the Stanley Pool area, West Sudan, Angola, the interior of Ubangi and part of Zanguebar. Often, however, their geographical work consisted in the correction of maps published by hasty explorers who had not fully understood their guides. As Archbishop Le Roy pointed out: "The geographical maps of new lands so reverently received by learned societies from the hands of explorers literally crawl with errors. Generally, out of ten names there are not more than two that are correct. I could refer here to a certain map where one can see indicated as geographical names words whose literal translation is: "That is a mountain," or "Quit bothering me," or, "I don't know."

**Natural History.** In the course of their apostolic wanderings throughout Africa, many Spiritans showed great interest in the flora and fauna of this freshly-discovered continent. Thus Father Klaine became a botanist who not only successfully introduced many new plants into Africa, but also enriched museums of natural history with thousands of new specimens. Others, such as Fathers Sacleux, Tisserant, and Sébire, published scholarly studies of African botany. Brother Francis Ruher became a specialist in African bees with several books and articles on the subject to his credit. In grateful acknowledgment of such contributions, European taxonomists named more than two hundred genera and species after Fathers Sacleux and Klaine each, and still more after the Spiritans Duparquet, Antunes, Tisserant, Trilles, Le Roy, Raimbault and others.

**Ethnology.** Even more than in rivers, plants, and animals, the missionaries were interested in the primitive peoples around them. As a result, several Holy Ghost Fathers became outstanding ex-
Archbishop Prosper Augouard, of Equatorial Africa, known as the "Cannibal Bishop."

Bishop Joseph Shanahan, the Apostle of Southern Nigeria.
Father Charles Sacleux, one of the Spiritans' foremost African linguists.

Father Constant Tastevin, C.S.Sp., in academic gown as Professor of Ethnology at the Catholic University of Paris.
experts in ethnology and anthropology. Best known of these was Archbishop Le Roy, who became the first occupant of the newly-created chair of the History of Religions at the Catholic University of Paris and acquired a scientific reputation as well as popular renown by the publication of his studies on the pygmies and the religion of the primitives. His eminence in this domain was well demonstrated by the fact that in 1906 he was invited to write the opening article of the new International Review of Ethnology and Linguistics: Anthropos. This he did very appropriately by means of a study entitled: "The Scientific Role of Missionaries" (Anthropos, vol. I, pp. 3-10). Other outstanding Spiritan ethnologists are Henry Trilles, Charles Estermann, Anthony Horner, Charles Duparquet, Albert Sébire, Joachim Correia, Maurice Briault, Charles Sacleux, Constant Tastevin and Charles Tisserant. Several of these, after returning from Africa, became Professors in their specialized subjects at various universities. Scores of others published their findings in Anthropos and other learned journals. In addition, they have written literally hundreds of popular-type articles on ethnological questions in magazines and journals destined for the general public.

Engel, 46 ff. Linguistics. Nothing reveals the soul of a people so much as the tongue it speaks, and nothing is more conducive to intimate contact with a people than a thorough knowledge of its language. It will hardly surprise anyone, then, that the most outstanding scientific contributions of Spiritan missionaries in Africa lie in the realm of linguistics. If any of these apostles had doubted the usefulness of such studies, he was urged on by the pressing invitations and even the strict orders of his superiors to learn thoroughly the languages of his district. Father Schwindenhammer, for instance, in indicating the purpose of an African residence always used the formula: "the conversion of the pagans and therefore the study of native languages." His successor in the generalate, Father Emonet, called this study "the first duty" of a missionary and warned that "anyone who neglects the study of languages fails in an essential point of his duty." The Vicars Apostolic of the different missions emphasized the same point and some even went so far as to make it

C. S. 3, 19; 21; 37 ff.
C. E. 3, 37 f.
Engel, 47

B. M. 18, 101; 1165

17The Pygmies appeared in French and Italian; The Religion of the Primitives in French (five editions), German, English, and Polish.

18Vol. 19 of the Bibliotheca Missionum uses one hundred and eighty-five pages just to list the titles of all publications of Holy Ghost Fathers about Africa between the years 1910 and 1940.
a rule that any new arrival who had not made sufficient progress after two years in learning the local language should be dismissed from the mission.

Although the missionaries generally did not fail in this respect, there are some isolated cases of what appears to be gross neglect in the fulfillment of linguistic duties. In 1925, for instance, the Propaganda had to remonstrate with a Spiritan Vicar Apostolic because his missionaries failed to learn the local language.

While the modern apostle usually has at his disposal grammars, dictionaries, literature, and the accumulated experience of a hundred years of his predecessors to aid him in his linguistic efforts, the same was not true for the early pioneers. Their studies were often hampered by most discouraging difficulties. To begin with, they had to face a bewildering multitude of dialectal variations in village after village. Then after eight or ten miles of travel, the language would vanish completely and be replaced by another of an apparently different kind. Interpreters were frequently unavailable or unreliable. Hardly any of the languages had ever been committed to writing, and they appeared very difficult to understand and still more formidable to speak. The only possible start seemed to lie in listening carefully and trying to catch a word here or there. How frustrating this method could be appears from an 1845 letter of Father Bessieux regarding the Pongue tongue:

The language is simple and easy, but I am still far from mastering it. From the very beginning I did not have an interpreter. The first months I did nothing but try to study the language. Since none of the several persons with whom I conversed about Pongue understood French, I made up a list of words but they did not correspond with the French terms I put alongside them. Although I managed to get a large number of nouns, I could never catch a verb.

When, after many months of hard work, the Fathers finally came to know a language, they were invariably dismayed by its primitiveness. Though suitable for the simple needs of everyday life in the jungle, it wholly lacked the vocabulary that was necessary to express the more abstract concepts of Christian Faith and civilized thought. Thus the linguistic task of the missionary became more than a simple study of an existing language. He had to work toward the unification of dialects into a single language,
the promotion of more universal languages (such as Swahili in the East and Lingala in the West), and above all at the enrichment of these languages by strengthening them with new words to express ideas hitherto unknown to their users.

If one considers the fact that the translation of such a simple prayer as the Our Father into the rich and cultured language of Java took ten years, he must shudder at the thought of the enormity of the task faced by the early priests in primitive Africa. One need not be surprised, therefore, if some of the solutions they worked out for linguistic difficulties are not acceptable and may still require further elaboration after more advanced study. It must be remembered that three of four centuries went by before Europe could build a Christian language and even then the task was brought to perfection only through the work of such geniuses as Tertullian, Jerome and Augustine.

It would lead us much too far afield to enter into a detailed account of the linguistic work of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Africa. The very quantity of their output is amazing. They have written approximately five hundred works in about seventy languages. Among these there are close to two hundred grammars and dictionaries, and a very large number of practical books such as catechisms, Biblical translations, prayer-books and elementary school texts. Some of them are small and badly printed pamphlets; others are monumental studies, as, for example, Father Sacleux's work on Swahili and Father Albino Alves' Bundu dictionary. A few have a very restricted use, like Father Lemblé's work in the click language of the Sandawe tribe, while others have been widely adopted for official use, e.g. Father Miranda Magelhaes' handbook of the native languages in Angola.19

The Spiritan linguistic works have one characteristic which distinguishes them from studies published by colonial government agencies: they pay much greater attention to dialectical variations. And for a very good reason. The first and foremost duty of these missionaries is to keep in touch with the people whom they are evangelizing. As a result, they are more concerned than others with differences, peculiarities, and modes of diction which the same

19The non-specialist usually has no idea at all about the enormous number of languages spoken in Africa. The 1930 Spiritan Bibliographie (p. 5) lists sixty volumes in the following languages of the Gabon mission alone: Pongue, Fan, Duma, Galoa, Eshira, Bulu, Kota, Mbete, Ivea, Ndumu and Kombé.
language displays in changing localities. For the same reason too they have written in lowly tongues that others will not even recognize as languages, such as various types of Creole French and Creole Portuguese. After all, their apostolic zeal embraces even those who understand and speak no tongue but these.20

e. Catholic Press and Youth Organizations

Catholic Press. As has already been mentioned, the first mission press began to function in Dakar as early as 1852. Three years later it undertook the publication of its first major works: a grammar and dictionary of the Wolof language. Other missions soon followed suit: for example, Landana in 1884, Loango in 1892, Caconda in 1904, etc. At present sixteen of these mission printing establishments function in Spiritan Africa.

As could be expected, for many years the output of these presses did not include any newspapers. It was limited to books and pamphlets, because the primitive level of culture did not yet create a demand for periodic literature and the mission staff was too small to engage in the editorial work that recurrent publications necessitate. The first Catholic newspaper, the Echo de Saint Louis, appeared in Senegal in 1906 when French anticlericalism made it mandatory to find new ways and means of maintaining the Faith.

This early paper did not survive, but since then interdiocesan forces have founded the weekly Afrique Nouvelle in Dakar. This mission also publishes the monthly Horizons Africains and a few parochial church papers. Other missions have followed suit in making the press serve the cause of religion by starting Catholic weeklies and monthlies. They now number sixteen, including those of insular Africa.21

Practical reasons forced a Spiritan in French Guiana to write a polyglot catechism in such heterogeneous languages as Tamul, Wolof, Arabic, Annamite and Bengali (the native languages of South-American Indians, Arabs, Senegalese, Indo Chinese and Pakistani!) As the reader knows, the population of Guiana draws its origins from all parts of the French Empire.

The following papers are listed in the État du Personnel of 1956:

Afrique Nouvelle, Dakar, weekly, 8,200 copies
Horizons Africains, Dakar, monthly, 500 copies
The Catholic Monthly, Sierra Leone, monthly, 1,300 copies
L'Effort Camerounais, Duala, weekly, 5,000 copies
Nieb Bekristen, (The Christians' Counselor) Yaunde, weekly, 10,000 copies
Semaine de l'A. E. F., Brazzaville, weekly, 4,500 copies
La Voix de l'Outouangui, Bangui, weekly, 1,700 copies (cf. B. G. 45, 78)
Of this total only three appear in a native language. The oldest of these is the *Rafiki Yetu* monthly in Swahili which was founded in 1925 by Father Alphonse Logeman in Mombasa to counteract the influence of non-Catholic journals that were being published with the support of the government. One of the main reasons for the general use of European languages in these newspapers is undoubtedly the Babylonian multiplicity of tongues in Africa. In many areas the dialectal variety would make it impossible to find enough subscribers for a paper in a native language. Africans whose education has progressed to a point where they become part of the reading public often know one European language well enough to enjoy a newspaper in English, French or Portuguese. Moreover, the Catholic papers usually have at least some sections written in one of the local native tongues.

*Youth Organizations.* The first attempts to introduce Catholic youth organizations in Africa were made in Senegal in 1906. Other missions of French West Africa followed suit when the anticlerical policy of the French government secularized the schools and forced the priests to find new ways to keep the Faith intact and shield adolescents from the pernicious example of European colonists. A Catholic Circle arose in St. Louis, Senegal. It organized its own orchestra, held musical soirees, and put on theater plays. For younger children, the Fathers created supervised playgrounds to keep them away from the corrupting influence of Mohammedan companions. Conakry, French Guinea, achieved such success with its brass band, its loan library, its recreational evenings and the sports-club which it started in 1908, that antireligious elements in the colony became apprehensive and vainly tried to start a competing group. Before World War I, in Brazzaville, the Fathers built a special youth center, equipped with athletic fields, reading-rooms, and a theater with a capacity of more than three thousand. This center was regularly visited by six to seven hundred youths.

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*O Apostolado*, Loanda, weekly, ? copies
*Revista Mensal*, Nova Lisboa, monthly, 4,784 copies
*Catholic Times*, Mombasa, monthly, 3,300 copies
*Rafiki Yetu*, (Our Friend), Mombasa, monthly, 7,000 copies
*Temoinages*, Diego-Suarez, monthly, 800 copies
*Vavolombelona*, Diego-Suarez, monthly, 800 copies
*La Vie Catholique*, Mauritius, ?, 5,000 copies
*Légionnaires*, Mauritius, ?, 2,500 copies

Recently the Owerri Diocese has undertaken the publication of a bi-weekly newspaper called *The Leader* and reports a printing of 18,000 copies.
and served also as a means of fostering Catholic marriages. Strangely enough, the same approach failed miserably in Rufisque (Senegal), and in Gabon only the dramatic groups were successful.

The big advance in youth work, however, dates from more recent times, especially from the period immediately preceding the Second World War, when increasing urbanization and the growth of modern materialism made this kind of social work imperative in the larger centers of population. The French-controlled territories report especially great activity in such youth organizations. For instance, the latest record (1951) of Sacred Heart parish in Dakar closely resembles that of a well-organized European parish: it has scout troops, sports-clubs, Catholic young workers groups, a boys' center, a young men's center, its own cinema, etc. Other city missions in the French territories, e.g. Duala and Libreville follow similar patterns. In Duala (French Cameroons), after World War II, Catholic Action underwent a reorganization. One specific feature of its numerous branches was the addition of a monthly day or recollection to counteract the growing materialism of this rapidly developing Mandate of the old League of Nations. In Brazzaville, near the famous St. Ann's Cathedral built in African Gothic style, Father Lecomte constructed a sports arena that seats twenty thousand and boasts a huge swimming pool.

In the Spiritan missions outside the French sphere of influence, there seems to be considerably less concern for youth work. This particular approach does not play the same important role as appears to be the case in French territories. It may very well be that in these areas the mission school system achieves the same end.

4. THE DIRECT MEANS OF APOSTOLATE

After this brief survey of the indirect means, we must now turn our attention to the direct means which the Holy Ghost Fathers have employed in their attempts to establish the Catholic Church in Africa. Because Chapter VII has already recorded Father Libermann's general directives in this matter, our study

22The absence of anything like the American Legion of Decency has left the French movie industry with a very doubtful moral reputation. To neutralize its bad influence somewhat, the Church has organized here and there cinemas which are safe for the whole family.
will be restricted here to a consideration of his followers' application of these broad principles under the following headings:

a. The occupation of the territory.
b. The technique of convert making.
c. The building of a Christian society.
d. The native elements at work in the Church.

a. Occupation of the Territory

In the first years after their arrival in Africa, the missionaries could do very little to effectively occupy the immense territory entrusted to their care. As the reader will recall, the first Vicariate stretched along five thousand miles of coast without limits to the interior, and the complement of men was pitifully small. All the pioneers could do was gain a foothold and establish bases that would support more extensive occupation manoeuvres at a later date. Nevertheless, although death and disease continued to thin the ranks of these valiant beginners, they started very soon to work toward an effective occupation of the northern part of Guinea.

Engel, 15 ff.

Bishop Kobès made plans for covering the whole area with a network of missions: one in every five leagues of his vicariate. Constant misfortunes in newly-founded missions prevented him from executing his plan and at his death in 1872 only four stations survived him, but the general modus agendi was established.

It was not until the last two decades of the nineteenth century that the Spiritan missions of Africa began systematically to divide their territory into sectors with a central residence surrounded by a large number of auxiliary stations. As a rule, such residences, occupied by from two to four priests and one or two Brothers, were constructed at strategically situated points that offered facilities for travel in all directions.

The auxiliary stations usually consisted of a humble chapel and a bush school staffed by a catechist. These were located in villages whose inhabitants showed interest in the mission and therefore offered some hope of conversion. Each string of stations along a river or jungle-track was regularly visited by one of the priests in the central residence. He and his confreres each had such a chain of stations entrusted to his personal care.

The system proved very successful, especially when the personnel of the central residence was sufficiently stable. Unfortunately,
in years gone by, sickness, death, and pressing needs all too often forced the Superiors to change the men from residence to residence with bewildering rapidity. Such exigencies prevented the missionary from becoming familiar with the peculiarities and special needs of his charges, and from gaining their full confidence. Worse still, it often obliged him to waste valuable time by constantly learning new languages and dialects.

The occupation of a large territory with relatively few men makes the life of these apostles greatly different from that of a country pastor. The priest is nearly always on the go, travelling from village to village. In some places it has been estimated that the missionary is absent from his residence about two hundred days a year. The reason for this constant travel is that the numerous bush stations and their catechists require constant supervision if their work is to be successful. In addition, the priest has to administer the sacraments in outlying districts to those who cannot travel great distances to the mission church. He must also visit new areas to make the mission known and to awaken a desire for a catechist. All this requires constant safaris which are far from being conducted tours. Although modern means of transportation have increasingly alleviated the burden, it still remains true that many of the missionary's travels take place on foot or bicycle along narrow pori and bush tracks, in a primitive boat up and down the stream, or by ox-cart along most rudimentary roads.

Originally, the creation of such networks of auxiliary stations was an effective way to occupy a country, but supervision often suffered from the effects of personnel shortages, especially when many of the central missions contained a large number of educational and social works which required the constant presence of the Fathers. It often became a question of choice between intensive work on a relatively small number of spots or an extensive apostolate covering the largest possible territory. Usually, however, the result was a compromise between the two until more adequate personnel made it possible to work both intensively and extensively.

More important even than occupying the land with a network of stations was the occupation of the Negroes' heart by gaining their confidence. A sure indication of success in this respect was the tendency even of pagans, especially in East Africa, to select the missionary to arbitrate their disputes,—a tacit ad-
From a primitive and temporary bush shelter, the mission slowly develops into an imposing complex of buildings, thanks to the unremitting labor and technical skill of humble Brothers.
mission that they recognized the unselfish motives of these white men. Moreover, the intimate knowledge of native languages, customs, and mentality which many of the Fathers possessed, constituted another powerful factor in their favor. The people came to look upon the priest as one of their own and on several occasions went so far as to elect him as their chief. Thus, for instance, the Nkomi tribes in Gabon solemnly inaugurated Father Bichet as the *Renima* (general king) of their land to whom henceforth the local kings deferred for all important affairs; the chiefs of the Dioba peoples in Senegambia elected Father Jouan as their leader; and in Tanganyika’s mission of Tegetero the population made Father Bukkems their headman.

The general respect and confidence bestowed on the missionaries made it relatively easy for them to substitute Christian practices for pagan customs. Thus, for example, they suggested that medals and rosaries be worn around the neck in place of the fetishes to which their people clung so tenaciously. They went out of their way to celebrate Christian feasts with all possible splendor and they organized solemn processions of the Most Blessed Sacrament, thereby satisfying the Negro’s love of pageantry and weaning him away from pagan celebrations and parades.

b. The Technique of Convert Making

*The Direct Approach to Pagans.* The direct approach to pagan audiences has always been a feature of the Spiritan apostolate in Africa. It varies from formal sermons to an assembled populace on the village square and brief explanations for the benefit of pagan bystanders on the occasion of sick calls and funerals to simple and informal discussions in the evening before a native hut. Incidentally, this latter type of conference appeals greatly to the African’s love of debate and palaver. Missionary journeys throughout the district usually offer many opportunities for such a direct approach, but it may also take place in the mission centers themselves whenever a crowd of pagans has gathered to watch the joy and splendor of Christian feastdays.

On occasion, little gifts were distributed as further incentives to attendance and friendly chiefs were sometimes asked to use

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23In doing so they took great care to explain the nature of these Christian practices lest the substitution become merely a change of superstition.
their influence in making people come to the sermons. Above all, however, the Africans' love of music and singing constituted a powerful attraction. The missionaries promptly availed themselves of it to drive their lessons home. Dividing the audience into two choruses, the priest would put his message into a song that was chanted antiphonally until everyone knew it by heart.

As one might expect, the subject matter of such sermons was and is limited to the most fundamental Christian truths and prayers: the Creed, the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary. The instruction always ends with an invitation to come to the catechumenate for further lessons and ultimately for baptism in the Church.

**The Catechumenate.** By this term is meant the period between a prospective convert's application to become a Christian and his actual baptism. Because of the enormous variety of peoples and conditions in the far-flung Spiritan missions of Africa, the Congregation has never laid down very definite rules about the nature and duration of the catechumenate. Had they existed, it would have been difficult to enforce them, for such regulations belong rather to the domain of the Vicars Apostolic appointed by the Holy See. In general, the Motherhouse counseled against extreme measures:

> Two excesses are to be avoided: on the one hand, that of admitting people to baptism after hasty and insufficient instructions (which could result in many baptisms, but few true Christians) and on the other, that of admitting them only after such a protracted, detailed, and difficult training that it practically excludes most catechumens by discouraging them and thereby renders the work of the mission sterile.

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B. G. 29, 692 f.

Engel, 63 ff.

On their arrival in the Two Guineas more than one hundred years ago, the Fathers had to combat the excessive laxity of the few native priests who were stationed in the area and administered baptism after little or no instruction at all. However, even the first Spiritan bishops of this mission did not lay down any firm and

> The early practice of giving little presents constituted a bad policy whose evil effects are still felt to this day. According to the latest report of the Sierra Leone Diocese it gave rise to distorted thinking that led the people to expect support from the Church. Consequently, in places where missions should now be self-supporting, there is need for allocations from other sources.
fixed rules but left it to the individual priests to determine how long the catechumenate would last. Only after the bitter disillusionment of numerous apostasies did these early missionaries learn the wisdom of deliberate thoroughness. After that, they not only scrutinized the candidate’s knowledge of the Faith; they demanded positive guarantees that he would be able to live up to that Faith after his baptism. Thus, for instance, in Thèès they did not dare to baptize a hundred well-prepared catechumens, because “it was not feasible for them to live as Christians,” and in another mission they turned away a number of well-instructed girls who requested baptism, solely because they were likely to be given in marriage to polygamous husbands. By 1920, in Senegambia the minimum duration of the catechumenate was two years or even more for anyone guilty of serious breaches of the Christian code during this period. French Guinea, which in 1907 was still satisfied with eighteen months, specified a minimum of two years after World War I and allowed an abbreviation of this period only in danger of death. The Nigerian missions, which at first limited the catechumenate to one year, increased the time to a year and one half in 1912, and then in 1918 to from three to four years or even longer. The results reached by this apparent severity amply justify the praxis.

Other Spiritan missions in Africa show the same trend. In Angola some missionaries at first hastily baptized after a few weeks’ instruction, but bitter disappointments soon forced them to increase the catechumenate to one year and then ultimately to a minimum of two years. In East Africa, where in 1892 kind-hearted Bishop de Courmont accepted one month (to be spent in the mission), a three-year catechumenate became the rule for adults in 1912.

Nowhere are the missionaries satisfied with mere attendance at religious instruction, lusty hymn singing and a theoretical knowledge of Christian truths. No matter how perfectly a catechumen may know the tenets of the Faith, he must give positive proof of his willingness and his ability to live a Christian life and of his steadfast proposal to persevere in it. For this reason, nearly all Spiritan missions now prescribe a minimum of two years for the catechumenate, part of which is to spent in or close to the mission.

The General Mission Directory of the Congregation, published in 1930, has no binding power on missionary bishops, but it condenses the experience and wisdom of a century’s apostolate. In it
we find that a probationary period of at least two years is specified and this is divided into two sections: the postulate and the catechumenate. The first of these two is open to all, whether polygamous or not, who want to know more about Christ. Its duration is left to the discretion of the missionaries. While in this postulate, the candidate learns the first elements of religion, the manner of baptizing in danger of death, and the way to make an act of perfect contrition. The catechumenate, however, is open only to those who show a sincere desire of becoming Christians, who know the first truths, and who are willing to repudiate idolatry and immorality (specifically polygamy).

**Baptismal Praxis.** After his probationary period, the catechumen must successfully pass a final examination before he is admitted to baptism. Although catechists may have prepared the convert for this step, Spiritan practice demands that a priest give this last examination and that it be seriously conducted. Naturally, a candidate’s ability and condition are taken into account, but he must reveal a sound knowledge of the Faith and its practice. Unless he does, his baptism will be deferred to a later time. Finally, to impress the neophytes with the importance of their decision, local regulations often prescribe that the ceremony take place on a solemn holiday and that it be followed by a little feast in honor of the new Christians.

With respect to children and adults in danger of death, the missionaries follow the general rules of the Church—viz., they baptize all children in danger of death unless prudence forbids and they require only the barest minimum of religious knowledge from moribund adults who wish to receive the sacrament. It would be difficult to estimate even roughly the total number of persons for whom heaven has been opened in this way at the last hour of their life, for not only the priests themselves, but the Sisters and Brothers, Catholic laymen, catechumens, and even pagans of good will take part in this spiritual work of mercy. In St. Louis (Senegal) alone, a single Sister baptized five hundred dying children between 1877 and 1881 and her case was not exceptional.

25 The strictness of this test is brought out, for instance, in a report of the Bundi mission of Brazzaville. Usually about a third of the candidates failed to pass and had to wait several months before being allowed to present themselves again.
The latest statistics of the Holy Ghost missions report a total of more than thirty thousand such baptisms in a single year.

c. **The Building of a Christian Society**

To build a Christian society in the midst of pagan surroundings, the Holy Ghost Fathers have relied heavily on the following means:

1. Native boarding establishments.
2. Christian family life.
3. Special Christian villages.
4. The Church's disciplinary, sacramental, and devotional practices.

1. **The Native Boarding Establishments**

Arriving in Africa when there was not yet even a hint of Christian social organization, the Spiritans in practically all their residences gathered children (usually ransomed slaves at first) into their mission compounds and separated them from their immoral environment. Then they would teach these unfortunates the rudiments of civilization, trying to inculcate in them a love of work and a practical approach to Christian living. It was a heartbreaking task, beset with many failures, but under the circumstances it appeared to be the only way to make a beginning.

Not every one of the missionaries possessed the necessary patience for this slow uphill educational work in savage surroundings under a broiling tropical sky. A few were too easily inclined to have recourse to the stick when good-will was patently lacking in their charges. However, Superiors quickly forbade the use of rods. Realizing that corporal punishment is sometimes necessary—as it is even in a well-civilized family—they permitted gentler corrective measures such as locking up recalcitrants or making them take their meals in a kneeling position. If strokes were called for—and they are still officially sanctioned in the British Commonwealth—they were preferably to be administered by lay assistants and not by the priests themselves.

In Senegambia, where the first of these native establishments began to function as early as 1844, the Fathers made the mistake of organizing them too much in the way of junior seminaries with too much emphasis on pious exercises. As Dr. Engel expresses it:
They educated the children in a European way and along monastic lines instead of preparing them for the life they would later have to lead as Christians." As a result, all too many of them refused to return to the simple life they had led before. They became idlers, beggars, thieves, and prostitutes. Fortunately, other Spiritan missions did not make the same mistake, and in Senegambia the Fathers soon adopted a different course when they realized that their first approach had been wrong. The emphasis then turned to practical training in agriculture and trades.

Despite many failures and disappointments, these boarding establishments attained the desired goal: a first generation of convinced and practising Christians that would serve as the foundation of a future Catholic society. Once this goal was reached, the boarding institutions gradually disappeared in most centers. As the Matombo mission reported in 1926:

In the beginning . . . the Fathers were obliged to devote their time and energy to the education of young boarders in order to make them good Christians and potential founders of Christian families. Their efforts have not been in vain, as the many Christian villages prove. . . . Today there are fairly numerous weddings of children from Christian families and thus the future of our villages is secure . . . The need to gather many children in boarding schools no longer exists, at least not for the boys.

The old type boarding establishment still functions in some of the more primitive areas—where the original purpose still exists—and also in a few other places where a widely-scattered population limits the effectiveness of the mission day-schools which have been substituted for them. The boarding schools now maintained in Spiritan missions are devoted for the most part to training future teachers, catechists, and priests.

As the importance of these early boarding establishments diminished, the missionaries found it possible to engage in more active visitation of the outlying stations in their district. They could now open local day-schools and thus effectively reach a larger segment of the population. The day-school revealed itself as far more appealing to the freedom-loving African youngsters who hated being away from home, but flocked in great numbers to schools established in their own villages.
Engel, 170 ff.  

Girls' Boarding Houses. To bring about a new generation of Christian families, the missions found it necessary to educate girls as well as boys. This task was (and still is) usually entrusted to Sisters.26 As a rule, the early training program provided for religious instruction, basic home economics, and gardening. Sometimes a little reading was added but rarely anything more advanced, because the boys did not want to marry a "lady" for fear that she would demand too great a degree of emancipation from her traditional position of inferiority. At best it would have been dangerous to teach them more, for a native girl with a little culture all too easily found a career as companion to a lonely colonist.

In the beginning, the recruitment of girls for these boarding schools met with great difficulties. Parents objected strenuously because girls were too economically valuable to be sent away from the village. At home, they could be used for cultivating the land and then they could be sold for a substantial amount to any rich old polygamist who wanted to add another wife to his collection. Religion, they argued, was good for men, but not for women. Sometimes, the Fathers solved this problem by paying the dowries of a large number of girls and thereby acquiring all rights over them. Thus, for instance, in Gabon, Father Bichet spent a large part of his personal fortune in purchasing little girls—thereby becoming their legal husband according to native law—and then trained them in the mission for eventual marriage to Christian young men. In other cases, mission-trained boys returned to their native villages, made their choice among the pagan belles, submitted the first down-payment on them, and then escorted their intended wives to the mission for Christian instruction.

Even after a first generation of Christian boys and girls had been formed in this way, several missions, notably those of the French Cameroons, retained a special type of girls' boarding establishment called fiancées' homes (œuvres des fiancées). Because of the widespread practice of cohabitation before marriage, the missionaries found it necessary to prepare young women for a Christian wedding by having them spend about six months in such a "fiancées' home," there to be instructed in religion, housekeeping,

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26 Stations without Sisters lodged the girls with Christian families or in dormitories outside the mission buildings, where during the night they would be under the guardianship of a trusted old matron or locked up securely.
and infant care. Most of the girls are brought to these homes by their prospective husbands, who provide for their food and clothing during their pre-marital schooling. While the young ladies are perfectly free to leave at any time, discipline is quite strict and its enforcement is rendered easier by the fact that the boys themselves demand full compliance with the rules. A serious infraction may involve postponement of the wedding-day, and the future husbands are understandably reluctant to have their marital prospects clouded by obnoxious behavior on the part of their betrothed.

In general, the results obtained by this method have been thoroughly satisfactory, particularly since the first Holy Ghost Sisters came to the Cameroons and assumed charge of this work in 1924.

2. *The Promotion of Christian Family Life*

Perhaps the gravest of all problems faced by the early Spiritans in their efforts to civilize primitive tribes lay in inculcating the concept of a truly Christian family. Numerous factors offered substantial opposition to the Catholic way of life in this respect. First of all, there was the universal practice of polygamy with all its evils and all its attraction for people who were living but little above the level of the brute. A man's social and economic prestige in tribal society was determined by the number of wives he possessed. They constituted his source of income, for the more numerous his wives, the more hands there were to wield a hoe. Then too the more they produced, the more money he had for the acquisition of additional wives. Moreover, the rich old polygamist was usually able to offer parents a better dowry for their marriageable daughters than could a young man of eighteen or twenty. After finishing the mission school, therefore, the boy often had to work ten to twelve years before he had saved enough to get married. In practice, these long years of waiting usually degenerated into a period of immorality and promiscuity. Then there was the cupidity of the girls' parents, who often went so far as to sell already married daughters to a new husband who might be offering a higher price. In addition, surrounded as they were by pagan examples, the boys themselves could not muster up much enthusiasm for a marriage that would

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27 The daily routine of these houses provides for three hours of religious instruction, six hours of work, and four hours for meals and recreation.

28 The present French government policy of paying multiple family allowances to polygamous husbands only tends to increase this moral curse and to keep the women in a position of abject economic and moral slavery.
B. G. 26, 769 bind them to one partner for life. Consequently, many of them preferred a trial arrangement with their prospective partners for a few years before getting married officially. Others persevered in concubinage to the very end of their lives.

Reports and statistics from the early missions show how heart-breaking it was to campaign against such deeply-ingrained customs. Gambia, for instance, with its two thousand Christians had not a single Catholic marriage to report in 1878 and 1879; Rufisque (one thousand Christians) was in the same situation in 1907, 1908, and 1909, and wistfully expressed the hope that its 1911 report might be able to mention three marriages; Boke had only eight Catholic weddings between 1898 and 1912. No wonder then that the early Spiritan missionaries paid dowries for hundreds of girls, educated them in their boarding schools and, after marrying them to Christian boys, settled the newlyweds in separate villages close to the mission. After doggedly following this procedure for many years, they finally saw the dawn of a new mentality. As time went on, Christian family life at last became firmly entrenched. The 1955 statistics of the thirty-one Holy Ghost Fathers' mission territories in continental Africa show astonishing progress in this vital area: they report a total of 27,508 Catholic marriages²⁹ out of a total of nearly three million Faithful, i.e. about nine per thousand. For the sake of comparison it may be useful to point out that the normal ratio of all marriages is eleven per thousand of population.

3. The Foundation of Christian Settlements

Because the neo-Christian families would have required a heroic degree of virtue to remain faithful to their obligations had they returned to fully pagan surroundings, the Spiritans founded special villages for Catholic families close to the mission compound. It was the only effective way to preserve the faith of these neophytes and at the same time create centers from which the Christian way of life could radiate over the pagan countryside. The method was officially sanctioned in the 1878 edition of the Constitutions:

To secure the perseverance of the newly baptized [the priests] shall try to gather them in groups around the mission so as to separate them from the influence of the pagans and

²⁹Plus an additional 488 mixed marriages.
from the bad example of Europeans. They shall then form Christian families among them and with these families establish Christian villages, so that all will be able to support and help one another in the Faith and in the observance of their religious duties.

As early as 1845 Father Briot had formulated a plan for such a village, but the initiative leading to the first real settlement came in 1852 from a group of young Christian couples in Gabon. They wanted to live near the mission and support one another in their efforts to lead a Christian life. Significant progress in founding successful settlements, however, did not occur till twenty years later, when the Senegambia mission founded the villages of St. Joseph (Ngazobil) and St. Benedict (Mbodien).

St. Joseph is a particularly good example of the development such a settlement came to achieve. In a few years, as more and more young families came to join the first couples, they laid out a regular street-pattern, replaced the traditional one-room huts of the pagans with somewhat more pretentious quarters built on family plots, and erected a small chapel. Although fire razed the village in 1877, it was quickly rebuilt. By 1885 the settlers were largely self-governing, with their own village council and their village police-force to lay down and enforce the rules of their settlement. They said morning and night prayers and the rosary in common, and went to Mass everyday. In general, the moral tone of the village was high, although contemporary reports of idleness and drunkenness indicate that these recent converts from paganism did not suddenly lose all their traditional vices.

In the following decades, the Spiritans gradually extended this system throughout most of their missions: Nigeria, the Congo, Angola, Zanguebar and, after World War I, the French Cameroons as well. This mission alone in 1929 reported that each of its two thousand catechetical stations was surrounded by from three to seven such villages. Strict supervision, of course, long remained a necessity. Coming as these settlers did from a wholly pagan society, they needed the constant support of the missionaries' praise and reproach to persevere even in their secluded villages. Disappointments in the form of backsliding into paganism or flight from the settlements were numerous and severe, but the Fathers patiently continued their efforts because they were convinced that
"... in journeyings often ..." by any available means.
"Go, therefore, and preach to all nations, baptizing them ..., and teaching them all that I have commanded you..."
at the beginning no other system offered a better chance of success.\textsuperscript{30}

In general, these miniature Christian societies, which recall the famous Indian reductions of Peru, achieved their purpose—viz., the establishment of deep-rooted Christian family traditions and customs and centers from which the Faith could spread more easily.

In 1891, for example, the Nigerian chief Idigo, along with fifteen other families, founded such a village and the happiness of this settlement so profoundly impressed the pagans around it that many burned their fetishes and became Christians. In 1890, pagans constructed a settlement of their own close to a Christian village near Bagamoyo and begged for baptism. Five years later, the Fathers of this mission reported that so many people wanted to become Christians and live in their settlements that they no longer knew how to accommodate them. In East Africa particularly, most of the central Spiritan missions originated from settlements that became overpopulated and necessitated the removal of groups to new focal points of evangelization.

Engel, 198 ff.

Despite its great success, the system had certain disadvantages also. In 1892, a pastoral letter of Bishop de Courmont, Vicar Apostolic of Zanguebar, indicates some of these: too much economic dependence on the mission was detrimental to personal initiative and love of work;\textsuperscript{31} there was no possibility for the families to become independent; and occasionally the priests interfered unduly in affairs that were strictly the personal concern of the family involved. Moreover, one may legitimately question whether, from a viewpoint of missionary strategy, the permanent separation of Christians from pagans would have been desirable, for it would have involved the restriction of the Christian example to those living in the immediate neighborhood of the settlements. Once the converts were strong enough in their Faith to live in little groups around a catechist anywhere throughout pagan territory, the system of isolation might well have been and usually was abandoned without great loss. Accordingly, in many areas, when in the judgment of the missionaries this stage

\textsuperscript{30}In cannibalistic areas these villages served also to save their inhabitants from the cooking-pots of hungry neighbors.

\textsuperscript{31}At first, the villagers worked on properties owned by the mission. In return, it provided for their needs and left them free one day out of five to cultivate a piece of land for their own use. Later, this system was modified and the settlers worked only thirty days a year for the mission.
was reached, Christian families were free to settle wherever they wished, as long as they were not too remote for contact with other Christians and with catechists. At that point, more frequent association with un instructed neighbors often resulted in the pagans' acceptance of Christ and his Church.

4. Promotion of the Church's Disciplinary, Sacramental, and Devotional Practices

As the periodic report of Linzolo mission pointed out in 1922:

Evidently, the regenerating waters of baptism do not radically change the mentality of our Negroes, but let us not forget our own ancestors. . . . If we have few scandalous renegades, we unfortunately have plenty of indolent, apathetic and even temporarily estranged sheep that can find their way back to the fold only on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd. For this reason the Spiritan missionaries energetically availed themselves of every means that would contribute to the perseverance of their converts. Practically all missions organized special catechetical instructions in which heavy emphasis was placed on the practical application of the Church's teachings to daily life.

Church Discipline. When advice and reproach did not produce the desired result, the priests sometimes had recourse to practices which were common in the early history of the Church but since have fallen into desuetude. For example, in Onitsha, Nigeria, repentant public sinners had to submit to a period of atonement during which they were not permitted to join their fellow-Christians in the church, but had to stand near the entrance or in the section reserved for pagans. During this period they were not allowed to receive any of the sacraments except that of Penance, and even then they could not come to Confession at the times reserved for Catholics in good standing. In Gabon, on a Pentecost Sunday, a Negro woman who lived in open concubinage with a European colonist attended the Pontifical High Mass together with her partner. Bishop Adam interrupted the service and publicly excommunicated both. As a result, the woman gave up her sinful life. During the next four years, the same prelate proceeded four more times in the same way against people known to be living in public adultery or concubinage.
Nor did the social position of an offender safeguard him against such measures. When the Sultan's brother in Kibosho (East Africa) apostatized for the third time and refused to listen to three public warnings, the Bishop promptly and solemnly anathematized him. Thereafter he was avoided by all Christians as if he were Judas. A similar fate befell King Felix Adande in Gabon when he refused to let his daughter return to her husband until a certain sum of money had been paid. When all admonitions appeared fruitless, the Bishop unhesitatingly leveled the Church's full weight of censure against him. The penalty was effective, for soon afterwards the king's daughter returned to her spouse and the monarch himself was reconciled to the Church.

Evidently such public penances and excommunications, which would hardly be recommended for Europe and America, must be seen in the light of local psychology and tradition. As the missionaries themselves pointed out:

In Europe these methods would be imprudent, but here they appear quite appropriate and our Christians themselves are the first to demand the punishment of culprits. Moreover, penances are accepted without difficulty and nothing appears more suitable to keep backsliders on the right track.

The introduction of the Catholic penitentiary practice of fast and abstinence offered unusual difficulties. In the first place, ecclesiastical regulations governing the fast are based on the European routine of three meals a day. This was unknown in most parts of Africa. Since one full meal a day was more or less normal, canonically speaking most Christians (and pagans) in Africa fasted the whole year round. In addition, it was difficult to explain to them why, although they advocated fasting, most priests were unable to observe the discipline themselves without seriously jeopardizing their health through their program of intensive work in the tropical heat. Then again, abstinence laws had to make provision for such unusual items as snails, caterpillars, grasshoppers, crickets, ants, and similar local delicacies. In general, these questions were subsequently regulated in such a way that white colonists are dispensed from the fast because of the climate, but both Negroes and whites are bound by the laws of abstinence insofar as they can be applied.

Liturgy and Holy Eucharist. The splendor of the Catholic liturgy unfolding around the mystical presence of God usually fills
even a man of culture with deep admiration and respect. It makes a most profound impression on the African Negro for whom, even in his most degraded state, the world of the supernatural is as real as his physical surroundings. For this reason the Spiritans insisted everywhere on celebrating the great feasts of the Church with all possible splendor according to the Roman liturgy. They taught their congregations to take an active part in the singing at all solemn functions. As a result, many an African church now puts European and American parishes to shame by the beauty and variety of its Gregorian chant. Whole congregations sing it with perfect ease and surprising artistry.

Frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist is particularly stressed, but at the same time emphasis is placed on careful preparation beforehand and a suitable thanksgiving afterwards. Consequently, many dioceses in Africa report a very great number of sacramental Communions. In the Spiritan dioceses of Nigeria, the French Cameroons, Morogoro (East Africa), and Bethlehem (South Africa), for example, individual reception of the Holy Eucharist averages once every two weeks, and communicants in the Diocese of Moshi are nearing an average reception of once a week. If one keeps in mind that many Christians live very far from the mission and therefore cannot go to Holy Communion as often as they would like, these figures are impressive indeed. More than anything else they indicate the strength of the Church in Africa.

C. A. 1955/56

Engel, 214 ff.

Deviotions and Confraternities. In addition to stimulating frequent reception of the sacraments, Spiritan missionaries carefully pointed out to their neo-converts that the great deviations of the Church would provide highly efficacious means to secure their perseverance in the Faith. As early as 1849, long before the devotion became popular throughout the Christian world, they solemnly consecrated the Gabon mission to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and established an annual day of adoration specially dedicated

B. G. 6, 540;

B. G. 45, 7
N. D. 9, 199,
348 f.

32Father Libermann was a great promoter of the Roman liturgy at a time when all but three dioceses of France followed the Gallican liturgy of Paris. Under his direction, Father Leo Le Vavasseur composed a liturgical handbook based on authentic Roman sources and published it in 1857. Soon many Bishops gave it official approbation for their dioceses. Successively reedited by Fathers Haegy and Stercky, this standard work on the liturgy is now being revised by Father Littner for the publication of its eighteenth edition.

C. A. 1955/56

33For all African missions of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the figures amount to about eighteen times a year per communicant.
there to. Other missions, such as those of Senegambia, Bagamoyo
and Loango soon followed suit. Others again, e.g. Senegal, Gambia,
Sierra Leone and Cunene, promoted the same devotion by way of
consecration of the family to the Sacred Heart, First Friday ob-
servances, Holy Hours of Reparation, and sodality exercises.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin soon gained great popularity
in the Spiritan missions. It manifested itself in the daily rosary,
special prayers during the month of May, Our Lady's Sodalities,
and popular pilgrimages. Before 1860, native Sisters erected the
first Marian shrine in a huge baobab tree three quarters of an
hour away from the Dakar mission. It became a beloved rendez-
vous for the neo-converts and was known as the shrine of Our Lady
of the Baobab. Other devotions, such as those directed toward Our
Lord's Passion, to Saint Joseph, the angels, the souls in purgatory
and a variety of celestial patrons, added their salutary and
strengthening influence as the years went on.

Sodalities and pious confraternities likewise played an important
role in maintaining Christian life. They flourished in great pro-
fusion, although only a few of them can be listed here: the Aposto-
ship of Prayer, Perpetual Adoration, the Scapular, Saint Ann's
Sodality, and Saint Agnes' Union. In every instance, however,
the priests took care not to promote an abundance of minor devo-
tions to the detriment of a strong, well-balanced faith. Practically
all of the supplementary religious exercises centered around Christ
and His holy Mother. The remaining few were slanted toward
certain aspects of Christian living. Thus, Saint Joseph and Saint
Ann were proposed as examples of family life and, Saint Agnes
or Saint Aloysius were held up as models of chastity.

d. Native Elements of Action in the African Church

Under this title we shall endeavor to describe the part that
Africans themselves have played and are playing in the establish-
ment of the Church in Spiritan missions. After first considering
the contribution of material support, we shall proceed to discuss
the lay apostolate, native religious orders of men and women,
and the formation of an African clergy.

1. The Material Support of the Church

Engel, 218 ff. In its first stage, any mission is entirely dependent on the re-
sources which its priests receive from home, from the Propaganda,
and from whatever enterprises they may engage in. This situation should never be considered as a permanent feature, however, for the purpose of the missionary’s work—the foundation of an autonomous branch of the Church—demands that the local population ultimately supply the material resources that are needed to make it self-sufficient in its work of salvation. For this reason it has always been the policy of Spiritan missionaries to insist on local contributions for the support of the Church. To quote only one example among many, Bishop Carrie of Loango wrote in 1898:

The people themselves whom we evangelize . . . have the duty, based on divine, natural and ecclesiastical law, to maintain the laborers of the Gospel or their clergy. And we have a grave obligation to make this duty clear to them . . . and induce them to fulfill it.

Of course, not all support need be in money. Often it may take the form of labor performed on mission plantations, gifts of food, or the building and maintenance of chapels and schools. On the other hand, as soon as an area is sufficiently developed to bring currency into common usage, the Spiritans always insist on financial contributions toward the maintenance of the Church and its works. Thus, for instance, Yaunde in the French Cameroons reported an annual Church tax of one franc per adult and one half franc per child, and in 1925 this provided an income of nearly a hundred thousand francs. The latest report of this mission lists local support “in money, in kind, or in work” as its first source of income. The mission of Nigeria “began to depend less on outside revenues” as early as 1916 and by 1920 “was able to pay by itself more than fifty percent of its educational expenses.” . . . Four years later, the hundreds of rural schools without government subsidy were able not only to meet the heavy burden of teachers’ salaries by means of school fees and church donations but in most places even to supply the books and other materials needed by the children.” The result of this local support was that “in the years following 1920, a huge network of school-chapels was extended over East Nigeria, most of which were independent of the Prefecture’s treasury for the salaries of their teachers.” Nearly all other missions report similar efforts to make the African Church independent of outside contributions as quickly as possible.
2. The Lay Apostolate

Lay Catechists. As we noted in Chapter VII, Father Libermann placed great stress on the training of catechists who would help the priests in their work by giving elementary religious instruction and the first rudiments of secular learning to both children and adults.

In general, the Holy Ghost missionaries realized the importance of extending the range and scope of their activity by means of these lay collaborators. To quote only one among the many Vicars Apostolic who stressed the value of catechists, we may turn to Bishop Vogt of the Bagamoyo Vicariate: "We need catechists and large numbers of them if we want our mission to grow and develop. A mission without catechists is condemned to paralysis and perhaps even to death." Thus it is not surprising that most missions, notably Southern Nigeria, Angola and the Cameroons, inaugurated carefully planned training programs or special schools for lay catechists and soon had thousands of them at work throughout their territory.

On the other hand, there are a few Spiritan missions which for a long time committed the strategically serious mistake of neglecting the formation of a corps of lay co-workers. Gabon, where Libermann's spiritual sons arrived in 1842, had not yet set up a system of catechetical posts as late as thirty years thereafter. Although the priests recognized their value, no worthwhile steps were taken in this direction until 1887, when the zeal of the Protestant catechists caused such serious losses that two Fathers finally devoted themselves to training Catholic teachers of religion. Five years later Bishop Le Roy, a convinced protagonist of catechists, became Vicar Apostolic of this mission and from then on a steadily increasing number of these valuable lay assistants began to extend the priests' sphere of influence.

The most notorious failure to make use of catechists occurred in Senegambia. Despite the great and obvious need for lay help and the successful example of other missions, the vicariate neglected Libermann's advice almost entirely. As Archbishop Le Roy sadly pointed out in a hitherto unpublished study entitled *The Catechists in the Missions,* "For the last fifty years, with ample means at its disposal, [the Vicariate of Senegambia] could have stemmed

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34*Les catéchistes dans les missions,* Paris, n. d.
the tide of Islam with a mighty dam of catechists. We regret very much that we must admit it has failed almost completely in this respect.” Instead, the Fathers concentrated their efforts on a vain and premature attempt to train a native clergy. As Dr. Engel expresses it:

Engel, 235

It is really strange and almost inconceivable that precisely this territory whose interior was still largely untouched by Mohammedanism, whose reports clamored for laborers and constantly complained about the shortage of personnel, did not think of training a solid staff of useful catechists instead of devoting its strength exclusively to the formation of a native clergy.

B. G. 10, 110; 385 Not until 1874, thirty years after its foundation, do the periodic reports of this mission speak of catechists and the need for developing this aspect of the apostolate. Even more surprising is the fact that, even after it recognized their usefulness and necessity, another forty years had to elapse before World War I mobilized great numbers of priests and practically forced it to engage more catechists! Only after the war, when Bishop Le Hunsec, the future Superior General, became Vicar of this mission did a systematic training program finally evolve.

B. G. 28, 408 Usually, catechists were married laymen who received a small remuneration for their services. As a general rule, they were taught a trade so that they might have an additional source of income. Some missions, however, such as Southern Nigeria, were quite successful with young unmarried catechists. The best students of the schools of this marvellous mission often volunteered for three or four years of unpaid service prior to seeking a paying job and getting married. In Gabon, Bishop Le Roy attained great results with so-called “Married Brothers,” i.e. pious laymen who dedicated themselves wholly to God’s service, received their food and clothing from the mission, and followed a simple daily rule of life, but were not bound to celibacy.

B. G. 26, 536 ff. Engel, 242

Engel, 227 ff. If ordinary neo-Christian families needed constant supervision and frequent visits from the missionary to keep them orthodox, the same was even more truly the case with these native religious teachers. Not only was there danger that they would deviate from the Faith in their teaching, but there was also the very real possibility that they might gradually slip back into pagan morals and
drag the whole village down by their bad example. The old periodic missionary reports abound in complaints about unfaithful and unsatisfactory catechists. Such things should not surprise us, but they should not blind us to the great zeal and spirit of sacrifice demonstrated by these devoted men and to the very substantial contribution they made when they received careful training and were closely supervised by the priests. Even at present, the importance of their role appears from the latest statistics, where one finds a total of more than twenty-four thousand of them working in the Spiritan missions of Africa.

C. A. 1955/56

Suenens, Edel Quinn, 69 ff.  

**Legion of Mary.** In more recent times, the active participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church received great impetus by the foundation of African divisions of the Legion of Mary. In 1936 its President, Mr. Frank Duff, sent Miss Edel Quinn\(^{35}\) to establish the Legion in East Africa. The members of this well-known organization of lay apostles engage in the visitation of homes, institutions and hospitals where they teach Christian doctrine, seek catechumens, induce lapsed Catholics to make their peace with God, regularize invalid marriages, and in general utilize all means open to laymen to foster the Church’s work. Despite enormous difficulties, Miss Quinn succeeded so well in the Nairobi Archdiocese that it alone now has a hundred and fourteen Praesidia or local groups functioning among its people. Other Spiritan dioceses in the area report similar figures: for instance, the Moshi Diocese has a hundred and sixteen units. From Nairobi the Legion spread throughout East Africa and from there to Madagascar, Mauritius and Reunion. The extent of its salutary influence may be seen from the fact that in 1956 a single Praesidium in Nairobi was able to arrange for more than a thousand baptisms.

Two years before it began to operate in East Africa, the Legion established itself in the Onitsha Vicariate of Nigeria (1934), where it now counts a total of two hundred and seventy-one Praesidia. In the Owerri Diocese of the same country, thirty-five hundred Legionaries organized in two hundred and twenty Praesidia constitute the strong right arm of Bishop Joseph Whelan, C.S.Sp.

\(^{35}\)She died in 1944 in Nairobi. The diocesan process, the first step towards beatification and ultimately canonization, of this zealous lay apostle was recently inaugurated by His Excellency John McCarthy, C.S.Sp., Archbishop of Nairobi.
After the Second World War, the Legion spread throughout the Spiritan missions of French Africa and the Belgian Congo. It is especially strong in the Cameroons. For instance, the Archdiocese of Yaunde has twenty-four Curiae in each of which there is a group of Praesidia. The general enthusiasm for this kind of apostolate is so great that there exists even a very unusual kind of Praesidium in Yaunde’s prisons. It is composed of convicts who organize communal prayers, speak about the Faith with Moslem and Protestant inmates, and urge their fellow-Catholics to adopt the practice of frequent Confession and Communion in order to rebuild their broken lives.

The speed with which the Legion is growing in Africa is evidenced by the fact that, six months after its introduction in the Diocese of Doume in 1956, fifty Praesidia were already actively engaged in various works of the lay apostolate. The latest reports from the various missions constantly refer to the powerful way in which this zealous organization of humble laymen and laywomen aids the Church in its spiritual task. Equatorial Africa, for example, sends word that “The best and most ‘productive’ form of Catholic Action is undoubtedly the Legion of Mary.”

3. Religious Men and Women

Engel, 251 ff.

Native Religious Brothers. Soon after their arrival in the Two Guineas, the Holy Ghost Fathers tried to attract native vocations to the Brotherhood, but it was 1860 before two African candidates began their novitiate in Senegambia. The next year, one was allowed to take private vows and four others started their preparation for the religious life. A few years later, however, the mission had to report that this first effort had ended in failure.

A new attempt was made in 1869 when Bishop Kobè open a novitiate of the Congregation in Ngazobil. It soon had four novices and three postulants. While two of these candidates solemnly pronounced their first vows in 1873, the Brothers’ novitiate disappears from the annual reports until 1888 when Bishop Picarda reopened it with three aspirants. Nothing more is heard of it until 1925, when the mission decided to start a native religious congregation called the “Little Brothers of St. Joseph.”

36Most of the information used in this section has been supplied by the Legion’s headquarters in Dublin.
According to the latest statistics, this society now numbers eleven members and eight aspirants.

The meager results achieved after a century of effort graphically illustrate how difficult it is to score success in Africa with this most humble of all vocations. The requirement of celibacy seems to constitute a serious obstacle for these people who have no age-old Christian traditions to counteract the enervating and sometimes demoralizing effect of the tropics. It would lead us too far afield even to record the long list of failures other Spiritan missions have encountered in their attempts to establish a native Brotherhood. Nevertheless, the Fathers kept on trying and in recent times their efforts have produced better results.

In the Cameroons, they reported (June 1954) a total of twenty-nine African Brothers and fifteen postulants, all except two belonging to the native congregation of the Brothers of St. Joseph; the Spiritan missions of French Equatorial Africa at the same time recorded a total of twenty-seven professed Brothers and eleven novices; the latest report (1956) of the Owerri Diocese in Nigeria reveals twenty professed Brothers in its Congregation of St. Peter Claver;\(^3\) the Moshi Diocese in East Africa opened a novitiate in 1947 and already has eighteen Brothers and seventeen novices in its congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, while the Angola missions reported a total of twenty-two African Brothers there. These figures do not loom very large, but they do show that progress is being made and they justify the hope that current efforts will not be attended by the same sort of failure that blasted earlier expectations.

\(^3\)Both of these congregations quite recently ceased to function as independent units. The Nigerian Brothers now constitute a Province of the Marist Brothers, and most of the Cameroonean have joined the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Native Religious Sisters. Quicker and more abundant success blessed the Holy Ghost Fathers' efforts to foster religious vocations among African women. As early as 1845, Father Libermann broached the idea of Negro Sisters and shortly before his death he urged Bishop Kobès of Senegambia to make a prudent beginning. In 1858, therefore, the Bishop founded an African Congregation of the Daughters of the Holy Heart of Mary and assigned to them the care of the sick, catechetical work, and the primary education of girls. Now a century later, this society

E. P. 31, I, 87, ff.
A. M. C. 226
A. M. C. 177
E. P. 31, I, 119
B. G. 44, 177
E. P. 31, I, 214
C. A. 1955/56
Engel, 256 ff.
L. S. IV, 198;
N. D. 13, 247
is the oldest of all African religious congregations.37 By 1865 it had its first native Mother Superior and ten years later it had already supplied thirty-eight Sisters to the mission. Because they were at home with native languages and customs, they rendered service of inestimable value. Despite this happy beginning, the Congregation suffered for many years from an inability to recruit enough postulants. Recently, thank God, the situation has considerably improved. In 1954, it counted a total of fifty-two professed members and forty-two aspirants.

Other missions sooner or later followed the example of Bishop Kobes and founded special congregations of native Sisters. A number of them disappeared without a trace after some years of lingering existence, but ten of them have survived to the present and show promise of future vigor. In addition, several European Sisterhoods working in Africa have successfully recruited local candidates. The latest figures on Holy Ghost missions (1956) show that the number of Sisters of African origin has now exceeded the six hundred mark. The Diocese of Moshi, staffed for the most part by American Holy Ghost Fathers, leads the way with one hundred and twenty African Sisters, who now outnumber their white companions five to one.

4. African Clergy

Engel, 262 ff. Priests. The primary goal of all apostolic activity is attained when there is a sufficient number of native priests under the direction of an indigenous hierarchy to carry on the work inaugurated by foreign missionaries. Faithful to Father Libermann’s insistence on this point, his spiritual sons have, from the very first moment of their arrival in Africa, always dedicated themselves to this end. Despite appalling difficulties and decades of bitter disappointment, they pursued it with unflagging zeal until their efforts at last began to bear substantial fruit.

The first Spiritan junior seminary began to function in 1847, shortly after the Dakar mission was opened, and it had ten students the next year. Just a century ago, the oldest senior seminary

37 We must take issue with John J. Considine who states in his interesting book Africa, World of New Men, New York, 1954, p. 273, that the community of African Sisters which appeared in Uganda in 1908 is "probably the first in Africa in date of foundation." This honor belongs to the Daughters of the Holy Heart of Mary, founded fifty years earlier by Bishop Kobes.
in Negro Africa opened its doors in the same mission (1857). In Gabon, another junior seminary was opened in the same year. Ten years later it had fourteen aspirants. The Congolese Prefecture mentioned its first efforts in the report of 1879, and on the east coast the Zanguebar mission inaugurated a seminary in 1870, seven years after the arrival of Father Horner, who was the Spiritan pioneer in that region. Two years later, there were twenty students. Most of the other Holy Ghost missions followed suit and spared no effort to prepare at least some candidates for the priesthood.\(^8\)

For many years, the results of all these efforts were far from encouraging. Of the three hundred students, for example, who passed through Senegambia’s seminary in Ndanzobil during the course of sixty years, only eleven reached the priesthood. In Gabon fifty-five years went by before the first priest was ordained.\(^9\) Between 1844 and 1924 all the Spiritan missions together succeeded in producing a total of only thirty-four priests. The immediate reasons for the very unimpressive ratio must be sought in the almost insuperable handicap of clerical celibacy, the powerful attraction of a lucrative job for ex-seminarians who were then among the very few natives with a higher education, the indolent character of primitive Africans, and the opposition of parents who objected to losing the income their sons could provide. It is only by exception that a priestly vocation will develop before the Faith has fully permeated the structure of the family and before society in general has reached a certain cultural level. Under favorable circumstances, at least one generation is needed to accomplish this,

\(^{8}\)The study programs of these early seminaries varied quite widely. In Dakar, Bishop Truffet, the founder of the first seminary, set up a program which allowed only the native Wolof language, Church Latin, and an introduction to theology. As he envisioned it, the senior seminary would continue the theological training and, after tonsure, include the secular sciences as well. He feared that an earlier introduction to secular learning would tempt the students to abandon their studies and seek a well-paid job in the service of a commercial enterprise. This ill-conceived program, which would not even permit the use of a modern European language, did not survive its author’s short sojourn in Africa. The opposite extreme was reached in the junior seminary of Bagamoyo. Its curriculum included French, Latin and Greek. Algebra, Plane and Solid Geometry; Physics and Chemistry; History and Geography; Vocal and Instrumental Music—altogether a program that would have done credit to many a modern seminary in Europe or America.

\(^{9}\)For the sake of comparison, we reproduce here the figures of the White Fathers’ Uganda mission: between 1878 and 1913 only two out of a hundred and sixty candidates reached the altar.
and where conditions are less propitious, as was the case in many Spiritan missions, two or three must pass before there can be any question of normal vocational development.

The turning point in the bleak outlook for seminaries was reached only recently in the decade preceding World War II. The statistics of 1937, for instance, indicate that although the number of African priests was still small (thirty-one for all Holy Ghost missions in Africa), there were one hundred and twenty-nine senior seminarians and six hundred and eighty junior aspirants. Since then, development has been very rapid, especially in the Cameroons, Southern Nigeria, Nova Lisboa (Angola), Morogoro and Moshi (East Africa), where African priests now constitute one third to one half of the total clergy. The latest figures show a total of 290 native priests, 302 senior seminarians and 1,448 junior aspirants are preparing for ordination in thirty-three seminaries in Spiritan missions on the African continent.

Although this demonstrates an encouraging growth, Africa still has a long way to go before its clergy will be numerically adequate. On the basis of one priest per thousand Catholics, an additional four thousand priests are needed just to take care of the present Catholic population in the Spiritan missions of Africa, to say nothing of the thirteen million pagans in these territories who are still waiting for the Glad Tidings of Christ.40 No wonder, then, that the missionaries so often repeat the Savior’s complaint: “The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few.” (Luke X, 2.) Africa is still a land that is desperately short of priests. Instead of increasing, the ratio of priests to faithful is going down constantly. Because this situation obtains in the present highly decisive period of Africa’s history, Pope Pius XII recently felt impelled to launch a burning appeal through his encyclical “Fidei Donum.” He begged the Bishops, priests, and laity of the old Christian world to aid Africa’s apostles in their hour of supreme distress by encouraging missionary vocations in Europe and America.

Prelates. In 1939 a significant step forward was taken in the formation of an autonomous African Church when the Holy See appointed Father Joseph Faye, C.S.Sp., a native of Senegal, as Prefect Apostolic of the newly created mission of Ziguinchor. Since then, three other African priests have become auxiliary bish-

40 In addition, these missions embrace four and one half million Mohammedans and one and one half million Protestants.
B. G. 44, 56 ops in Spiritan missions. The first of these, Most Reverend Paul Etoga, was consecrated on November 30, 1955, in an open air ceremony at Yaunde before a crowd of more than seventy thousand people, numerous public officials, and fifteen European prelates who had come to witness this solemn moment in the history of the Church. For the first time, a Negro of French Africa received the fullness of the priesthood. Three months later, in a similar ceremony held on the campus of Libermann College at Duala, Cardinal Tisserant conferred the episcopal consecration on the Most Reverend Thomas Mongo before fifty thousand witnesses. In 1957 Archbishop James Knox, Apostolic Delegate, imposed his hands on Monsignor John C. Anyogu and made him auxiliary Bishop of the Onitsha Archdiocese in Nigeria. With the more rapid development of an indigenous clergy in many of the old Holy Ghost missions, one may expect similar occurrences to become commonplace in the years ahead and sections of these territories will soon be completely entrusted to an African clergy under the direction of bishops chosen from among their own people. The Holy See took a significant step in this direction after the death of Bishop Bonneau in 1957, when it appointed His Excellency Thomas Mongo as his successor in the Episcopal See of Duala, French Cameroons.

5. Political Factors and Spiritan Missionary Work

Engel, 148 ff. Collaboration with Colonial Governments in the Work of Civilization. Because missionary activity in culturally primitive areas necessarily involves efforts to civilize the people, and because European colonial powers were keenly interested in the process, governments and missionaries often aided each other in their work: the mission by supplying personnel and the government by granting funds for building and maintenance. Everybody profited from the arrangement—the missionaries, the civil authorities, and most of all the backward people who were the object of their attention. In general, the government was unable to recruit sufficient nonmissionary personnel of the required moral caliber to undertake the giant task, because few laymen were willing to live in uncivilized areas and expose themselves and their families to an untimely death by mysterious tropical diseases. The missionaries, on the other hand, were unable to pursue their civilizing work on a large scale without government aid because they simply did not have the necessary funds. Consequently, the government and the missions usually worked—and still work—together. Such a program of col-
laboration prevailed in the territories controlled by Great Britain, Belgium, and Portugal, and it extended as well to the former German colonies. That is why Spiritan missions in the African countries controlled by these nations now educate close to a million children in nearly twelve thousand schools.

How seriously the work of civilization is hampered when the state refuses to collaborate with the missions is graphically illustrated by the condition of the French colonies. There Parisian anticlericalism gave little or no support to mission schools. As a result, the educational potential of Africa's youth in these areas has remained severely limited. In 1950, French West Africa, with a total population of nineteen million, had only 1,125 schools attended by 137,985 pupils. This left 2,200,000 children (93%) without any education. In French Equatorial Africa, with a population of over four million, there were only 602 schools with 70,121 students, while the total number of school-age children amounted to about 600,000. Such statistics contrast sharply, for instance, with those of the Owerri diocese in Nigeria, where in 1956, 190,270 children attend the mission schools alone. Because of the more enlightened educational policy of England, as many children were able to receive their education in the schools of this missionary diocese as in all the governmental and private schools throughout French West and Equatorial Africa. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the population of these French territories is eight times as large as that of the Diocese of Owerri.

Despite the more advantageous conditions in non-French colonies, some of those areas also cause the missionary to be apprehensive about the future. In the Belgian Congo, for example, the currently flourishing mission-school system is threatened by

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41 As was noted above, France has recently become more generous toward the private schools in its colonies. Nevertheless, even now its support of such academic institutions is still far from sufficient. The 1950 figures for West and Equatorial Africa show a total of $856,000 allocated to 512 private schools with 66,788 pupils, i.e. about $13.00 per student.

42 These figures include both governmental and private (mission) schools. For French Equatorial Africa the figure amounts to about forty-eight percent.
repercussions from the educational policies which the present Brussels government has espoused at home. In South Africa, the mission schools are hampered by the extreme segregationist policy which this republic follows. In Nigeria, the newly-proposed educational program may severely curtail further development of Catholic schools and will, if it is adopted, interfere radically with the parents' right to send their children to a school of their own choosing.

Special Attention to Native Leaders. While collaborating with the colonial governments in education, Holy Ghost missionaries never forget how important a role is played in the lives of the people by their own chieftains and kings. For this reason they have always endeavored to gain the good-will of these native leaders and to have them send their children to the mission-schools. In this way, it was hoped, the succeeding generation of chiefs would be Christian, or at least favorable to the Faith. Moreover, a very salutary example would thereby be set for the subjects of these local leaders. In the Congo mission of Landana, the Fathers even opened a special school exclusively reserved for "the sons of kings, princes and the highest ranking nobility." Important gains were recorded when, as a result of this venture, the chiefs and kings themselves became Christians and personally promoted Christianity within their domains. The periodic reports abound in examples of the wholesome influence exercised by such conversions.

Nigeria provides a striking example of this. In 1900, King Obi Fatou of Nsubbe received baptism. A council meeting of nine chieftains then decided that thereafter all parents should send their children to the mission school. Three of the chiefs themselves enrolled in the catechumenate. One year later, the people of Onitsha, although still largely pagan, elected Samuel Okosi Okolo King of Onitsha. He had been a catechist of the mission and his first act was to destroy the royal idol that had traditionally been used for cursing people and condemning slaves to death. He then induced the British government to impose the death penalty for the murder of new-born twins (a then current superstitious custom), and to decree heavy prison sentences for polygamy. All of these developments reached a dramatic climax in 1955, when Bishop Joseph Whelan of Owerri solemnly crowned Francis
Allagoa as Catholic King of Nembe with all the splendor of the ancient medieval ritual for the coronation of monarchs.

*Missions and Nationalism.* No one saw more clearly than Father Libermann that the activity of his French priests in uncivilized and savage Africa would necessarily involve a measure of political control by France. Although he had warned his priests not to become political agents, he wrote in 1845:

I do not know to what extent the French government is interested in seizing these regions . . . , but it appears evident that the method by which we plan [to civilize them] is the most efficacious way to establish the French rule in these lands.

Yet, if any man lacked even a trace of exaggerated nationalism in favor of France it was Libermann. We could not defend all of his followers on the same score without doing a disservice to historical truth or miss an opportunity to learn by the mistakes of the past. Despite Father Libermann’s repeated warnings and the Holy See’s constant insistence, a few otherwise outstanding Spiritan missionaries never quite mastered a clear distinction between God and Cesar in their work.

Of course, we cannot consider every action involving serious political consequences as a betrayal of the missionary’s primary purpose. For instance, it would be difficult to blame Father de Glicourt for supplying the French government with information leading to the recapture in 1779 of St. Louis, Senegal, from the British, when we recall that this Catholic French settlement had been forbidden to have a priest. Nor would one blame Bishop Bessieux for refusing to be repatriated when France wanted to abandon Gabon after the Franco-Prussian War, even though the result of his action was to keep this colony in French hands. Then too, the missionaries cannot be held responsible if, ten years after they arrived at Dakar, France claimed the area as part of its sphere of influence on the ground that French Spiritans were there.43 We see no reason for sharing Dr. Engel’s dissatisfaction with the

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43 One can hardly agree with Dr. Engel when, in his otherwise excellent study of the Spiritan missionary method, he suspects Father Briot of undue nationalism because in 1845 he dressed the students of the mission school in a uniform consisting of white trousers and a blue shirt with red collar and red buttons, even though these happen to be the colors of the French Flag. As we have seen in Chapter V, Libermann’s priests in Senegal at that time were so anxious not to appear as agents for the French government that they even broke relations with the French Navy.
Holy Ghost Fathers in Ngazobil, Senegal, when they allowed the French Army commander to visit their residence with a hundred and fifty soldiers in 1863 and to "demonstrate most emphatically that he was interested in the mission and would, if necessary, support and protect it by force of arms." After all, the local chief had limited the Fathers' construction program to flimsy buildings whose walls could easily be riddled by bullets! Security such as the French commander offered was, therefore, justifiably welcome.

We should not even reproach Bishop Augouard for lending the mission steamer Leo XIII to a French expeditionary force when it set out to crush the power of Rabah in the Lake Chad region, for this Sudanese chief, after the fall of Khartum, had fled there with his army and for fifteen long years had terrorized the local inhabitants by a reign of plunder, slave drives, and wholesale murder. Collaboration in the defeat of this tyrannical outlaw can hardly be called reprehensible nationalism. It was exactly what one might have expected of a priest, irrespective of blood ties.

Unfortunately, even when these and similar occurrences are explained away, there still remain other less excusable facts. Augouard, for instance, constantly collaborated with Brazza in the conquest of French Equatorial Africa in such a way that, as Georges Goyau expresses it, "with the crucifix in one hand and the national flag in the other, Bishop Augouard conquered a territory three times as big as the mother country for civilization and for France." He persuaded the local kings of Loango, Pointe-Noire and Cabinda to accept the French protectorate over their domains, and if it had not been for the unwillingness of Captain Cordier, Brazza's lieutenant, to confirm the treaties concluded by this Spiritan priest, nearly the whole coast from Gabon to the Congo River would have become French controlled territory.44

In an unguarded moment during a speech he even went so far as to claim openly: "Some people have accused me of being more of a Frenchman than a missionary. They did not realize that this was the most beautiful compliment they could have paid me."

Although we have no reason to doubt Bishop Augouard’s sincere conviction that he was acting in the best interests of his mission, most people would find it hard to justify his *modus operandi*.

On the other hand, Bishop Augouard was far from being slavishly subservient to the French Government. His fearless denunciations of his country’s unchristian policies caused Governor General Antonetti to remark at the Bishop’s funeral that Augouard had been “an avowed enemy of the Administration.” And when his good friend de Brazza favored the Islamization of the schools, the “Cannibal Bishop’s” terrible thunder gave rise to the most violent and painful storm that ever raged around the ears of the disgraced Governor.

We have no desire whatsoever to imply that exaggerated nationalism was a common fault among French Spiritan missionaries. A plethora of examples might be cited to prove the opposite. For instance, when their Zanguebar missions in East Africa became the object of conflicting French, British and German interests in 1885, and the French Fathers were urged to choose sides, they promptly declared that “they abstained completely from becoming involved in political questions and restricted themselves exclusively to religious affairs.” The Germans, who eventually took over the territory, acknowledged the sincerity of this contention, for their Society for the Exploration of East Africa reported:

The French mission of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and the Holy Heart of Mary has remained faithful to its well-known purpose, not only in theory but also in practice. As a matter of principle [the Congregation] eliminates political designs from its missions, and only rarely has it become involved in them. Without sounding the trumpet but with unflagging zeal, these missionaries devote themselves to the promotion of the Christian spirit and the benefits of our civilization among the black population.

The Angola missions, which are politically controlled by Portugal, offer another example. Although this nation was extremely jealous of its national heritage and tended to regard foreign missionaries with deep suspicion, hundreds of French Spiritans have evangelized Angola throughout the past century.
without giving rise to any reasonable apprehension over the political danger of their presence.45

Although a few French Spiritans may have gone too far in their national preferences when the interest of their own country conflicted with that of other colonizing nations, there never was any doubt about where their sympathy lay when the welfare of their native charges was involved. In such cases they constantly gave their prudent support to the cause of the populations they had come to evangelize. This fact inspires confidence in the role they will play during the next twenty or thirty years in Africa for, as the reader undoubtedly knows, a crucial test of the purity of intention displayed by all Catholic missionaries will undoubtedly come within a few decades. Now that many regions are rapidly moving toward greater or complete political independence, it will be of extreme importance for the priests working there to avoid undue attachment to the interests of their own fatherland, and to eschew anything that might interfere with their basic function as founders of a native Church in mission lands.

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In the preceding pages we have described the general characteristics of the Holy Ghost Fathers' apostolate in Africa. Certain features of their missionary method seem to be especially typical: their flexibility and adaptability to the situation at hand, their early efforts to train a native clergy, their emphasis on economic development by means of agriculture and technology, their wholesale establishment of Christian villages. As the primary stage is completed, they then proceed to lay greater stress on schools, colleges, and youth groups, moving with great deliberateness toward the time when the Christian society they created will reach full maturity and take the torch from their hands. Let us now turn to the actual missions in which these principles have been put into practice.

45We say "reasonable," because some Holy Ghost Fathers, such as Charles Duparquet, the founder of the modern Angola missions, were the object of violent articles and political accusations in Portuguese newspapers and other publications, despite the fact that their actions had given no justification whatsoever for these attacks. Father Duparquet in particular has been fully vindicated by Antonio Brasio, C.S.Sp., who could never be suspected of minimizing Portugal's rights. Cf. Antonio Brasio, "A 'Politica' do Padre Duparquet no Sul de Angola," Portugal em África, 1946, pp. 168 ff.; A. da Silva Rego, Curso de Missionologia, Lisbon, 1956, pp. 302 ff.