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SPIRITAN NEWS

FEBRUARY - MARCH 1978

Number 12

CONGREGAZIONE DELLO SPIRITO SANTO - CLIVO DI CINNA, 195 - 00136 ROMA

SUMMARY

- AN EVENT:** International Meeting on Spiritan Formation
- DOCUMENTATION:** Apostolate to the Nomads in Eastern Africa
- NEWS:** Official - Camerouns - Nigeria - Pakistan - Fr. Laval - Fr. Griffin - Our Jubilarians - Our dead.

An Event:

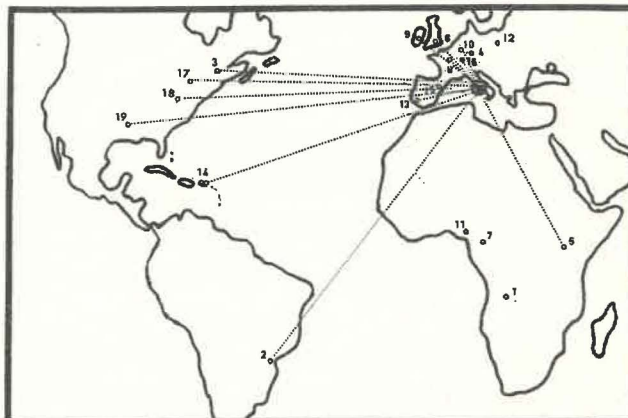
INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON SPIRITAN FORMATION

For the first time in 15 years, the General Council has just held in Rome from December 18 to 23 a meeting with those in charge of the formation of 300 young Spiritans. There were 15 Directors, representing 15 Provinces and Districts. Unfortunately there was nobody from Nigeria, Angola, or the French-speaking African Foundation. A General Councillor of the Holy Ghost Sisters, herself in charge of formation, came to the meeting as an observer.

There was no intention of trying to channel Spiritan formation into a strict routine which would be the same for every country. It was much more a question of sharing experiences and of fostering a greater awareness of internationality. Anyone who has even the slightest knowledge of today's problems and of the difficulty of the work of formation nowadays will clearly realize that such a meeting could not be a gathering of "triumphalistic Directors". Too many of them have had to suffer, or are still suffering, in their daily work, sometimes without the fraternal support of most of their confreres. Still, there was no sense of discouragement; quite the contrary, even in the face of what is sometimes called the "trough in the wave" of vocations. Whether from a Province with 80 young men in formation or from a Province with none for the moment, all the Directors of Formation were ready for serious study of their problems, without any of the misunderstandings which sometimes occur in meetings of representatives from different linguistic and cultural blocks.

This serious search for solutions and in-depth sharing of the difficulties of one another's work opened the way for the work together. Such genuine availability is one of the best guarantees of the future of formation in the Congregation and it would be wonderful if this attitude were shared by all our members. It was not all easy, however. The necessity for translation slowed things down and was a spur to the Directors of Formation to devote themselves seriously to learning another international language.

Of course, in a six-day meeting not all the possible questions could be studied exhaustively. The most time was spent on the International Summer Sessions mandated by the 1976 Enlarged Council and upon a deeper study of the very notion of internationality.



- 1 - Angola
- 2 - Brasil
- 3 - Canada
- 4 - Deutschland
- 5 - East Africa Foundation
- 6 - England
- 7 - Fondation d'Afrique francophone
- 8 - France
- 9 - Ireland
- 10 - Nederland
- 11 - Nigeria
- 12 - Polska
- 13 - Portugal
- 14 - Puerto Rico
- 15 - Espana
- 16 - Suisse
- 17 - Trans Canada
- 18 - U.S.A.-East
- 19 - U.S.A.-West

There are more than 300 (perhaps as many as 340) young Spiritans in "upper-level" formation. Half of them are professed. The lack of a precise total is due to the various ways of listing them in the different circumscriptions, and to the fact that some Provinces have not sent in up-to-date information and statistics.

The distribution is approximately as follows: 50 novices, 65 doing active apostolic experience, 120 in philosophy (or first cycle), 80 in theology (or second cycle), and 15 young Fathers doing university courses.

There are very few young Brothers in formation, probably not more than 10. Still, there are several young confreres who are doing a full course in theology without necessarily wanting to be ordained priests.

Some decisions were made with respect to the **Summer Sessions**: the first one will take place in 1979 and will be more an experience of living together than a series of courses and conferences.

Internationality was seen not as a negation of the values of one's national origin (it is too important that we be truly ourselves!), but rather as an attitude of availability, of solidarity; as a sort of obsession with real community; as a capacity for conversion, for accepting and understanding oneself and others. It will not be enough for international teams to have such an attitude. It is needed in every community, even where all the members are of the same nationality.

No doubt there will be more meetings of this type. At least that is the wish of all those who participated.

Documentation

Apostolate to the Nomads in Eastern Africa

This documentation is a summary of a seven-page article which appeared in the AMECEA Documentation Service No. 133 of December 7th., 1977. This Documentation Service is published by the Secretariat of AMECEA (the Association of the Episcopal Conferences of East Africa) which groups together the Episcopal Conferences of Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Sudan. Address: P.O. Box 21400, Nairobi, Kenya.

For many years, the Church's pastoral priority was concentrated on more densely inhabited areas. A substantial missionary approach to the nomads of Eastern Africa was not made until the last decade or two. When this approach was initially made, it did not usually meet with immediate success. The self-contained society of the nomads remained apprehensive of anything from the outside. Those sent to the nomads had often worked previously among the more sedentary people of Eastern Africa and tried to use the same approach to the nomads. This often failed. The failure was due partially to incorporating structures that were not sufficiently flexible for this new kind of apostolate. Barriers were broken down and some nomads became Christians. But many of these new Christians were school children, who later often found it difficult to live their Christianity in their tribal milieu once they left school. A more direct approach to the tribal society was needed and this was later taken by a number of missionaries. These began explaining who they were, why they had come there. Some asked why they hadn't said this before? A degree of success followed and at times whole families were baptised. A young Masai of Tanzania has already been ordained a priest.

In July 1976, the AMECEA Bishops approved the following proposals:

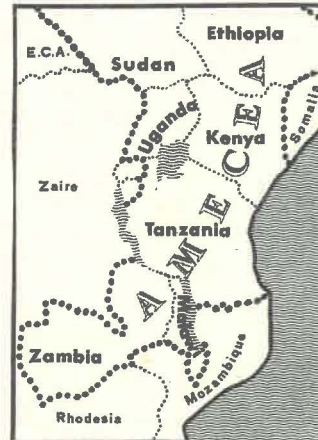
- A more thorough study conference on the apostolate to the nomads be held sometime in 1977;
- Experiences, plans and approaches to be shared through a new service to be called "APOSTOLATE TO NOMADS", with subjects such as the religious mentality of the African nomad, methods of Evangelisation and several pastoral experiences.

A Pontifical Commission for Itinerant People had already been established in the Vatican for the worldwide apostolate to people on the move. It produces a periodical entitled "ON THE MOVE".

The projected meeting at Nairobi 1977 would seriously study problems that are specific to the

"Persevere in the development of flexible and realistic structures. They will enable you more efficaciously to reach the world of nomads, so different and yet so lovable. Help each other above all to live the mystery of the Incarnate Word. He, too according to the words of Saint John, has pitched His tent amongst men... At this time when the Church is re-assessing its presence in the world of the poor, at this time when our nomad brothers are frequently the object of discrimination and harmful propaganda, help them to benefit more from their human and spiritual riches: their joys and their particular hardships..."

(Paul VI to the first International Conference on the Apostolate to the Nomads, Rome, 1975).



The approximate number of nomads and quasi-nomads in AMECEA comes to a total of 5, 832,700, divided as follows:

Sudan	: 3,083,000 (18%)
Ethiopia	: 1,101,000 (4%)
Kenya	: 846,700 (7%)
Uganda	: 390,000 (4%)
Tanzania	: 302,000 (2%)
Zambia	: 110,000 (3%)

nomads, including the incarnation of the liturgy. "Incarnation" had already been adopted by the Bishops of Africa to replace the inadequate term "adaptation". The precise meaning of this term is still evolving in Africa and has yet to be finalised. The experience of those working among the nomads should help identify its full connotation, since, for the most part, their work is one of first evangelisation and, therefore, they have few existing structures to change.

So that the Gospel may be presented in keeping with the spirit of the nomads' traditions, a knowledge of their language, customs, traditions, thought patterns is essential. At the AMECEA Plenary, the Bishops recognised that a special pastoral situation exists in evangelisation of the nomads and encouraged those Ordinaries in this pastoral situation in the pastoral initiatives they may have to take.

As about six million nomads lead their cattle from watering hole to hopefully greener pastures across the rolling plains of Eastern Africa, they remain to a great extent a people apart. Circumstances, history and tradition have made it so.

Living mainly in marginal lands that support little vegetation, their areas are necessarily sparsely settled and many nomads must live on the move. There is a society that is structured, but one which is often plagued by drought and famine, economic and political exploitation, disease and severe hardships.

Conservative in mentality and traditionalist in outlook, the nomads are protective of their ways. Suspicious of outside influence, fearful of encroachment by other tribes and separated by vast distances from the hub of modern life, they live a life that has its joys and fulfillments, but which is extremely isolated and harsh.

Many of the nomads' thought patterns are religiously orientated. The Holy Spirit has been working among them long before the missionaries arrived. Living close to God's work in nature, they may often be closer

to Him than others living amidst the distractions of the modern world.

Normally they pray frequently. Some of their tribal songs are discovered to be hymns. The Masai have a "prayer leader". The Turkana have traditional "priests", who are not witchdoctors but leaders who care for the morality of the tribe. The Marsabit nomads have a concept of God which may be doctrinally and theologically impoverished, but, as lived, is extremely rich. They pray and their religion penetrates the whole of their lives. Their religious beliefs and practices are less a doctrinal formulation than something practical which the family and the community absorb and practise.

The nomads have a strong sense of community, and the reasons for having small Christian communities may be more meaningful to them than to many others. Although the traditional tribal unit can differ from tribe to tribe, the leaders play an important role in nomadic communities and, even though the people move, a good degree of stability can usually be retained in the small Christian communities.

Representatives of the AMECEA personnel working among the nomads met at Karen College, Nairobi, from 31 October to 5 November 1977. The themes discussed were: how to build Christian communities, how to find ways of making the Church in the nomad areas ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to the nomads of today, how to seek the best method of bringing Christ to these nomads without imposing unnecessary burdens on them, how to help and guide the isolated missionary in his difficult task. The following resolutions and recommendations were passed:

1 - NOMADIC LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT.

- That the Bishops listen to what the nomads themselves feel their needs to be;
- That on the basis of the above, they help the people become aware of and utilize already existing resources for education and development appropriate to both their needs and their culture;
- That where no suitable resources already exist, the Bishops take on themselves the responsibility of creating, with the people, programmes and structures for adult education and social development.

2 - METHODOLOGY.

- That Bishops strongly impress upon those working among the nomads in their dioceses, that it is their duty to know the language, thought-patterns and structures of the people they serve;
- The Bishops, also, are asked to be aware of the fact that the work of getting to know a language which is often not written, and to know a people well, is a matter of years and not of months. This task requires the understanding, support and patience of the ordinaries;
- The Bishop in each Diocese is asked to appoint one person, or a team, whose particular task would be to specialise in research and be responsible for disseminating the fruits of his work among all those evangelising the nomads in the Diocese;
- We suggest to ourselves that we take most seriously this duty and not only begin or renew our efforts at language and culture studies, but also make it a point to share the results of those studies among ourselves.

3 - CHURCH AND COMMUNITY AMONG NOMADS.

- That we be conscious of existing traditional communities and build our Christian communities on them to whatever extent possible;

- That we be careful not to add any unnecessary elements to these communities, which will disrupt the traditional unity of that society;
- That leadership of Christian communities be recruited out of the existing natural leadership whenever possible;
- In our approach to people we must be aware of their structures of leadership and the meaning these structures have in the culture;
- That permission be sought to give all functions delineated in Vatican II for a deacon to lay-ministers; especially baptism, marriage, distribution of the Eucharist;
- That these ministers be installed in a para-liturgical action, officiated over by the Bishop or his delegate;
- That help be given to new Christians to administer their own acceptable symbols in the Christian spirit;
- In introducing Christianity, we should build on local economic structures, so that the Christian communities become self-reliant rather than introduce foreign economic structures and support;
- The Bishops should care for the training of the local nomadic leadership.
- All Bishops should encourage their pastors to explain to their Christian communities the necessity of both unity and variety within the Church;
- Because of the particular nature of nomadic life it is difficult, often impossible, to maintain the young Christian communities as genuinely Eucharistic communities, particularly in view of the scarcity of celebrants and the difficulty of maintaining contact with a people on the move. To solve this problem, we present to the Bishops the following three options for study:

- providing more missionary priests, expatriate or indigenous;
- increasing the education of catechists and ordaining those who prove themselves suitable;
- the ordination of those elders who prove themselves men of strong faith and good character, who would then be the appropriate ordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

4 - INCARNATION AND LITURGY.

- We ask that someone in each Diocese should have the opportunity to study the "Peak Moments" (birth, marriage, reconciliation, etc.) in the lives of the people, so that a Ritual for Nomads could be set up for those people becoming Christians;
- We ask the Bishops to be understanding of the difficulties involved in nomadic ministry and that experimentation should be not only allowed but encouraged, realising as well that mistakes will be made.

Tentatively, the next full meeting is planned for February 1979 at Karen College, Nairobi.

NEWS

Official

- Father GENERAL left at the end of January for Senegal and Mauritania (where he will join Fathers GROSS and van SONSBEEK). After the visit there, he will continue on to Gambia and Sierra Leone. After several weeks in Rome (mid-February to mid-March), he will visit Kenya and possibly Ethiopia. He will return to Rome at the beginning of April.
- Father DALY went to Kenya in mid-January and will be there until early April. He will try to visit Ethiopia also.
- Father WALSH went to the United States in early January to take part in a meeting of Spiritan Major Superiors of North America. The principal topic was

an evaluation of the international novitiate at Ferndale (U.S.A.-East).

- The next ENLARGED GENERAL COUNCIL of the Congregation will take place not in Rome, but in Knechtsteden, Germany, from May 4 to 14, 1978.
- There was a meeting of Principal Superiors (Kenya, Kilimanjaro and Bagamoyo) on December 14 at Namanga (Kenya). It was followed by a meeting of the Formation Committee of the East Africa Foundation on December 15 and 16.
- The annual meeting of Principal Superiors in French-speaking Africa (Cameroun Yaoundé, Cameroun Doumé, Gabon, Bangui, Congo and Senegal - representing almost 600 confreres) will

be held at Yaoundé at the end of February. Father GROSS, Assistant General, and Father YOU, Provincial Vicar of France, will take part.

- The Chapter of the German Province is being held in two sessions. The first was at the end of December and the beginning of January, with Father GENERAL and Father THIELEMEIER in attendance. The second session is being held at the end of January.

- During 1978, the District of Kabba (Nigeria) will hold a Chapter in the form of an Enlarged Council. After a preparatory meeting in January, the Enlarged Council will hold two sessions: in May and in November.

- The Chapter of the District of Kenya will take place in early April. Father GENERAL and Father DALY will attend.

- After almost a year's absence due to serious illness, Father Joseph BOUCHAUD has just returned to Rome and taken up his work again in the documentation center at the Generalate.

Cameroun

On December 21, the Pope accepted the resignation of Bishop André LOUCHEUR, C.S.Sp. from the Diocese of Bafia in Cameroun. Bishop Anathase BALA, C.S.Sp., a native of Cameroun, is his successor. He was ordained as Coadjutor Bishop in 1976. Bishop LOUCHEUR is 67 years old and has spent 36 years in Cameroun. He had been Bishop since 1968.

Nigeria

The Holy Father has appointed Bishop Michael Ugwu ENEJA to the See of Enugu as successor to Bishop Godfrey OKOYE, C.S.Sp. who died in March 1977. Bishop ENEJA was formerly Rector of the Seminary of Onitsha. More recently he was Spiritual Director in the Major Seminary of Enugu. At the time of his appointment, he was Pastor of Christ the King Parish and Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Onitsha.

The new Diocese of Awka has been erected in Nigeria, taking territory from the Archdiocese of Onitsha. The new Bishop is Albert Kanene OBIEFUNA, recently Rector of the Major Seminary at Enugu. (The Enugu Seminary has more than 250 theologians, of whom 80 are deacons. This must be a world record.)

Pakistan

Three Spiritans left for Pakistan on December 19: Fathers John KITCHEN from the Province of England, John O'BRIEN and Eddie FLYNN from the Province of Ireland. They will work in a first evangelization project which is under the jurisdiction of the Episcopal Conference of Pakistan. For the first two years, they will work with a team of Dominican Fathers in the Diocese of Multan. Their address is: Catholic Church, RAHIMYAR KHAN, Pakistan.

Father LAVAL's Beatification

The cause of Father LAVAL's beatification is going very well: a first miracle has been accepted, and the Holy Father has just dispensed with the requirement of a second miracle. The date of the beatification will be Mission Sunday, October 22, 1978.

"Francis GRIFFIN Street" in Tanzania

The Regional Council of Arusha, wishing to honor the memory of the first priest to take up residence in the city in July 1926, has decided to give the name "Francis GRIFFIN Street" (Barabara ya Francis Griffin) to the road leading to St. Theresa's Parish in Arusha.

Very Rev. Father GRIFFIN was a missionary in Tanzania from 1926 to 1933, and Superior General from 1950 to 1962. He now lives at Rockwell College in Ireland where, at the age of 84, he still teaches French to the advanced classes!

Our Jubilarians

- Mar. 1 : Bishop Thomas BROSNAN (Sierra Leone), 25 yrs. a Bishop
- Mar. 19 : Fr. Michael J. C. O'CONNOR (Kenya), 60 yrs. professed
- Mar. 19 : Br. Gondolphus JANSEN (Holland), 50 yrs. professed
Br. Pamphilus MAAS (Holland), 50 yrs. professed
- Apr. 15 : Fr. Aloys ENGEL (Germany), 50 yrs. a priest
Fr. Joseph KIRSTEN (Germany), 50 yrs. a priest
Fr. Anton STRACHOTTA (Bethlehem), 50 yrs. a priest
- Apr. 25 : Bishop Joseph WHELAN (Ireland), 30 yrs. a Bishop

Our Dead

- Dec. 3 : Br. Beatus VOLL (Germany), 75 yrs.
- Jan. 1 : Fr. Antoine HUSSER (France), 63 yrs.
- Jan. 9 : Br. Jean CADALEN (France), 73 yrs.

So far, we have no "Letters to the Editor" section, but . . .

We do get some letters – some addressed to the General Council and some to the Information Service – giving the reactions of one or other reader to the topics treated by the Generalate Team in "IID". These letters are very few in number, unfortunately still too few to make up an issue of "Documentation" in SPIRITAN NEWS. We still hope to be able to do so as soon as possible.

We wish you would write in your individual or collective opinions (full agreement, reservations, negative reaction . . .) concerning, for example, the 5 or 6 most recent issues of "IID". Extracts from these can be published anonymously and would give the General Council an opportunity to clarify particular points in the interest of all.

Because of postal delays, as well as the time required for printing, such reactions should not be put off "until later".