

Fall 2014

Editor's Introduction (English)

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Introduction

The Venerable Father Libermann was writing *Instructions for Missionaries* when he wrote the letter to Charles Lairé that contained these oft-quoted lines:

The people of Africa do not need and will not be converted by the efforts of clever and capable missionaries: it is the holiness and the sacrifice of their priests that will be the means of their salvation ... The missionaries must possess a holiness which draws down upon the Africans the all-powerful and merciful merits of Jesus.

Paul Coulon, “Exchanges on the Essential,” shows how the teaching in the letter to Lairé is a succinct summary of the *Instructions*. Another reason for including this article is to introduce our readers to Coulon’s methodology (akin to the biblical historical critical method) that understands the founders within their context while tracing their relevance for today. **Donald Nesti** often spoke of the gem that is Libermann’s *Instructions for Missionaries*. So I asked him to “translate” this for modern readers. His commentary, “Living the Life of Self-Giving Love,” excellently transposes Libermann’s teaching onto relevant modern keys. This essay is among the best explanations I have read of Spiritan “apostolic life,” “practical union,” what Libermann means by “holiness,” and why it is crucial for mission.

Dean **James Swindal**, “Pope Francis and the New Evangelization,” presents the pope’s Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, outlining some key thematics it develops, its view of the role of the interplay of faith and reason, and its outline of the role that education plays in evangelization. It concludes with three challenges for the future. **James Chukwuma Okoye**, “*Evangelii Gaudium* and Pope Francis’ Pastoral Plan,” examines the pope’s Exhortation as a sort of blueprint for how Pope Francis intends to govern the Church. Several themes in some of his interviews recur in this Exhortation. **Ian Edwards**, “Let it Be: Wellbeing as Fiat for a Life that Gives Birth to the Divine,” shows how, like Mary, Mother of Jesus, wellbeing is wholeness, a response to the divine call to become the persons God intended us to be, our best selves.

This issue contains seven reflections on Spiritan charism and education. In the 2013 academic year, Duquesne faculty and staff met a couple of times on Spiritan pedagogy under the leadership of Fr. Ray French, the Vice President for Mission and Identity, and Dr. Darlene Weaver, the Director of the Center for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. **James Chukwuma Okoye** kicks off the section with an

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overview of Spiritan education showing how various contexts and “signs of the times” affected Spiritan commitment to education. **George Boran** and **John Assey**, “Reflections on Educational Commitments in the Congregation of the Holy Spirit,” summarize the findings and proposals of the 12 participants in the Rome meeting of July 3-9, 2011. This meeting prepared the position on education eventually adopted by the 2012 Bagamoyo General Chapter. **George Worgul**, “Spiritans Charism and Ethos in Education,” argues that the Spiritan charism functions as a particular activation and sign of the charism of the People of God of compassion for the poor and oppressed. He opines that “Duquesne students reflect some new forms of poverty which cry out for mission as evangelization of the poor and educating for liberation and integral human development.” **Joseph Okafor** traces “The Spiritan Contribution to Education in Igboland” which was such that “for the period 1885 to 1970 a history of education in Igboland will have the Spiritans front and center.” **Maureen O’Brien**, “Spiritans Pedagogy and Critical Thinking in United States Higher Education,” outlines the characteristics of both critical thinking and Spiritan pedagogy and demonstrates what they contribute to each other. Doctoral students, **Rebecca Durbin** and **Jessica Martin**, teamed up with **Jason Margolis**, their professor, to search for common themes that connect Spiritan pedagogy and spiritually-based educational theory. **Ronald Arnett**, “The Wonder of Communicative Encounter,” calls for clarity in what educators bring to the table for conversation. As in a good business, research and development and considerations for a long-term future trump marketing temptations that risk the future for immediate relational customer satisfaction. Such misguided relational effort to salvage a campus would be no more than “emotional prostitution.”

Dean **Edward Kocher**, “Learning from Libermann,” shares in a very personal manner how Father Libermann influenced his work as an academic administrator at Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit. Adrian van Kaam’s biography of Father Libermann, *A Light to the Gentiles*, is at the core of this experience. **Lina D’Ostilio** presented a well-received paper to the Duquesne University Board of Trustees Executive Committee meeting of March 21, 2014 outlining the twists and turns of “Community Engagement, Civic Learning, and the Spiritan Charism.” She lays out the parameters, demands, and difficulties of *true* service learning in the university context.

James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp. (Editor)