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SPIRITAN NEWS

May/June 1998

N° 122

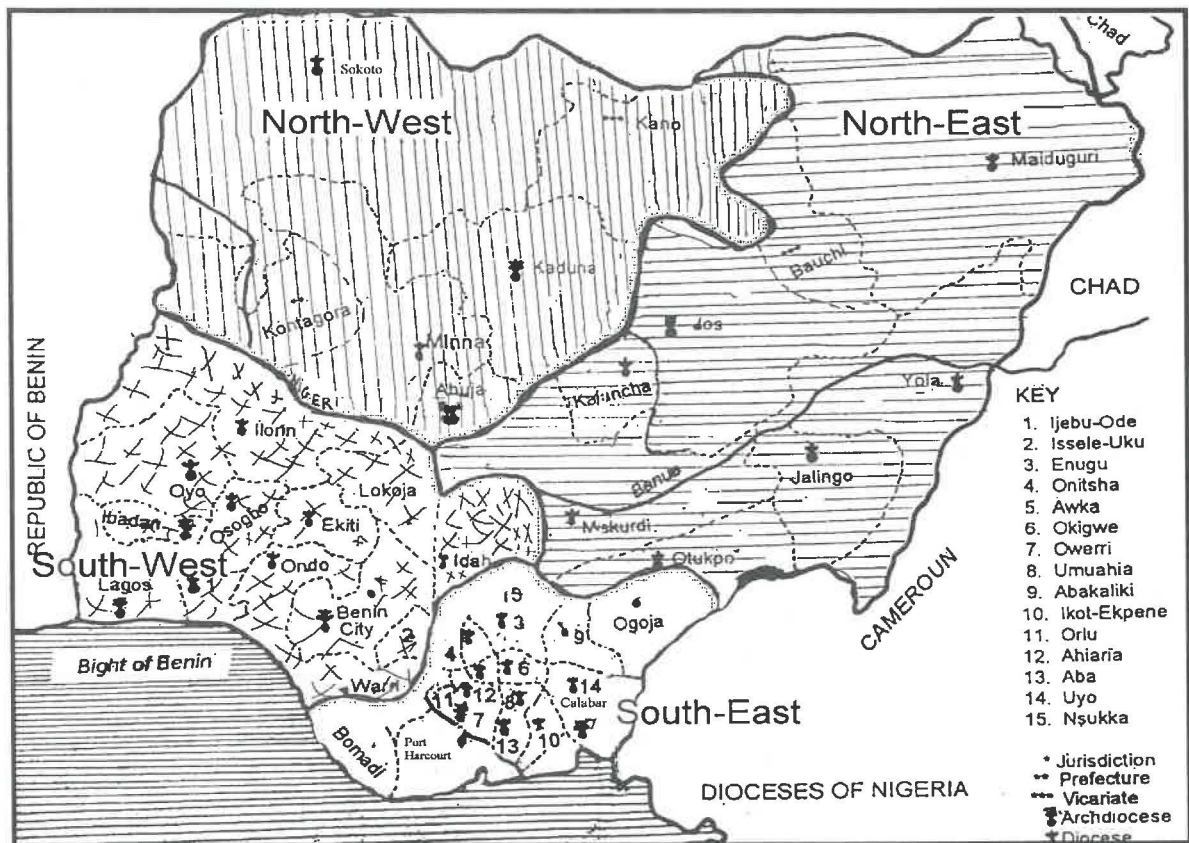
CONGREGAZIONE DELLO SPIRITO SANTO - CLIVO DI CINNA, 195 - 00136 ROMA

Spiritan Presence in Nigeria

The first group of Spiritans arrived in Nigeria in 1885. In the course of time, three circumscriptions have developed and existed together in the country: the District of Makurdi, the District of Kogi (former Kwara-Benue) and the District of Nigeria-East, which later evolved to become the present Province of Nigeria.

From 1952, these circumscriptions have welcomed local Spiritan vocations from their areas of work. With the birth

of the West African Foundation (WAF) in 1979, the District of Makurdi opted for collaboration with WAF by sending the vocations that come from its area of work to WAF. In the search for a common vision for the future of Spiritans in Nigeria, the successive General Councils have been dialoguing with the three circumscriptions and WAF since 1983, to see if all the vocations coming from the different parts of the country could form one indigenous circumscription in Nigeria.



Present General Council

Despite several meetings, things remained as they were. It seemed to the present General Council that this was a possible source of tension among the Spiritans in Nigeria.

In the spirit of the last General Chapter (cf. Itaici 37.4 & 39.3), the General Council decided to re-examine the issue and invite representatives from Spiritans from Makurdi by origin and appointment, the Province of Nigeria, the Kogi District, and the Superiors of the Anglophone circumscrip-

tions in West Africa, to a meeting in The Spiritan International School of Theology (SIST), Enugu, Nigeria from 10 - 13 April, 1996. A second meeting was held in Ejisu, in Ghana, during the regional meeting of Anglophone West African Superiors from 14 -18 January, 1997.

Consensus

A consensus was reached after these two meetings between representatives from all the various parties on the following points.

- * In the near future, a new Province of Nigeria will be set up, allowing for decentralisation with regions. Each region will have a regional Superior. It would be the Province of origin of all future Nigerian Spiritans.
- * Those from Nigeria who are already members of WAF will be free to choose to stay there or join the newly constituted Province.
- * In order not to disturb the welcome rapid growth of the WAF, it was also accepted that the change will not take place immediately.
- * Meanwhile, joint missionary projects and vocations' ministry will be launched by the Nigerian members of WAF and the present Province of Nigeria.
- * A joint commission will also be formed of representatives of WAF and the Province of Nigeria to elaborate further the plan for the new Province of Nigeria.

Statistics : Country

Area.....	911,000 Km ²
Independence.....	01 October 1960 (from UK)
Population.....	107,100,000 (1997)
Natural Increase.....	3.4%
Estimated Population.....	231,600,000 (2025)
Life expectancy:	Male/fermale: 53/56
Infant Mortality.....	130-160 per 1000
GDP per capita.....	US\$ 295 (1995)

Statistics : Province

Members.....	320
Bishops.....	2
Brothers.....	7
Priests.....	168
Junior Professed.....	143

and some other Vicariates and Prefectures in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Mongo in Guinea, Zimbabwe.

Second Meeting: Joint Commission

A second meeting of the joint commission was held in Aliade (Makurdi District - Nigeria) from 10-13 May, 1998.

There was consensus on the broad outline of the responsibilities of the Regional Superiors.

These responsibilities will include relative autonomy with regard to promotion of vocations and the accompaniment of candidates up to the postulancy, promoting closer contact and animation of the confreres in the regions, relations with the local Bishops, movement of confreres in the regions in consultation with the Provincial Superior and Council. The Regional Superiors will also be members of the Provincial Council.

The Provincial Council will be made up of the Provincial Superior, the first and second assistants, the four regional superiors, and the bursar. The Provincial, the first and second assistants should come from different regions of the new Province.

First Meeting : Joint Commission

During the first meeting of the joint commission which took place at SIST from 18 - 19 December 1997, there was a consensus that the projected new Province of Nigeria will be made up of four regions and will begin in the year 2000.

The four regions were divided on the basis of the existing dioceses in the country and will consist of the following:

- North-East: Makurdi, Otukpo, Jalingo, Bauchi, Jos, Kafanchan, Yola and Maiduguri,
- North-West: Sokoto, Kano, Kaduna, Kontagora, Minna and Abuja,
- South-East: Port-Harcourt, Bomadi, Onitsha, Enugu, Owerri, Orlu, Aba, Umuahia, Calabar, Uyo Ogoja, Okigwe, Abakaliki, Nsukka and Awka,
- South-West: Idah, Lokoja, Benin, Warri, Ondo, Ekiti, Ilorin, Oyo, Osogbo, Ibadan, Lagos, Issele-Uku and Ijebu-Ode.

Abuja, the new capital of Nigeria, was proposed as the administrative headquarters of the new Province.

Some areas were identified for possible common projects for the Province of Nigeria and WAF: the Vicariate of Kano

The bursar and the secretary will be appointed by the Provincial after consultation with the Council.

The members of the commission were not able to arrive at a consensus as regards the method for the selection of the Provincial Superior.

With regard to the structures of formation, each region is to have its own postulancy and have responsibility for it. However, a region could collaborate with another one.

A second novitiate for the new Province to be set up in a new region is foreseen in the near future while the first and second cycles will remain where they are presently.

These recommendations from the work of the joint commission are to be submitted to the councils of WAF and Nigerian Province as well as to the General Council for approval.

Regarding the plans for the movement of the West African Foundation (WAF) towards a Province, the Enlarged Council of WAF which took place in February 1998 has proposed that WAF should work towards becoming a Province in 2000 when the criteria have been fulfilled. Before then the members of WAF, native of Makurdi, will be consulted as to where each would like to belong as his Province of origin.

GENERAL CHAPTER

The General Chapter will take up its responsibilities as stated in SRL Nos 212 - 227. The opening retreat will be followed by the Reports of the Superior General and the General Bursar. There will be plenty of time allotted for questions and discussions. One task assigned by the Itaici Chapter is re-evaluating SRL, Chapter VII on "*The Organisation of the Congregation*" and proposing changes if necessary.

Central Commission

It will be proposed that the Central Commission consist of the Sup. Gen., Moderators, the Gen. Sec. of the Chapter and Chairpersons of Groups. The Central Commission when approved, will take over the Direction of the Chapter.

The Proposed Procedure

Each topic will be introduced to the General Assembly by a Capitulant who will give the background to the topic. After presentation, the Assembly will divide into groups for discussion and the findings will be reported to the General Assembly. A written report will be given to one of the drafting Committees who will prepare a reflection paper. Some days later the reflection paper will be presented to the General Assembly for their reaction. The groups will again meet, using the reflection paper as a basis, to discuss guidelines. Results will be presented to the General Assembly and some days later a drafting committee will present the proposed guidelines for discussion, amendments and voting.

Presentation of Strands

The General Council reflected on the synthesis of the replies to the Questionnaire which was sent to each circumscription in 1996. As a result of their reflection, the General Council elaborated "*Four Strands of Spiritan Life*" ie. four main themes for discussion:

- * Our mission,
- * Our Sources of Inspiration,
- * Our living together,
- * Collaborative Ministry.

In order to avoid remaining in the realm of the theoretical, one or more delegates will present the experience of their circumscription in relation to a chosen theme. This will be followed by an opportunity for questions, clarifications and reactions. In this way the theoretical will be complemented by the lived experience of confreres.

Maynooth aims to join theory and praxis. Reflecting on experiences will help capitulants suggest recommendations and guidelines

There will be eight presentations on "*Our Mission*" which includes our commitment to Justice and Peace, four on our "*Sources of Inspiration*", five on our "*Living Together*" and three on "*Collaborative Ministry*".

The following schema shows how presentations on aspects of '*Four Strands of Spiritan Life 1998*' will be distributed over a week of the Chapter:

Our Mission (Two days)

Two presentations on Spiritan Mission (30 min. each):

- i) First Evangelisation..... *P. Osuji*
- ii) First Evangelisation..... *G. Meyer*

Two presentations on Ministry to Youth (20 min. each):

- iii) Education *C. Promis*
- iv) Youth Ministry *E. Meaudre*

Two presentations on Justice and Peace (30 min. each):

- v) Justice and Peace, General Perspective:
J. Skinnader
- vi) Justice and Peace, A Brazilian Experience:
J. Kilcrann

Two further presentations (30 min. each)

- vii) Refugee Work *Ph. Massawe*
- viii) Justice and Peace as lived daily in Cameroon:
G. Sireau

Our Sources of Inspiration (one day)

Two presentations on 'Our Inspiration' (30 min. each)

- ix) Testimony from a War Situation ... *G. Mbiligi*
- x) An African Expression of the Spiritan Charism:
G. Luseni

Two further presentations on 'Our Inspiration' (20 min. each)

- xi) Evangelisation of a Missionary *A. Jansen*
- xii) Re-motivating Aging Provinces :
K. Breidenbach

Our Living Together (One day)

Five presentations on 'Our Life Together' (20 min. each):

- xiii) International Community *J. Blanco*
- xiv) A Community Experience from Africa:
R. Tabard
- xv) Lived Solidarity *A. Amadi*
- xvi) Varied Expression of Spiritan Community in
our European Provinces *J-P Hoch*
- xvii) The experience of an aging Province:
P. Ward

Collaborative Ministry (One day)

Three Presentations on Collaborative Ministry:

- xviii). Group presentation on Collaborative Ministry
by Lay Associates with *F. Wijnen (1 hour)*

Two further presentations (20 min each)

- xix). An African experience..... *B. Diemé*
- xx). Continuity of Charism in the Irish colleges:
B. Hally

Lay Associates

In addition to those named in Spiritan News No 121, Gary Warner, TransCanada, has accepted an invitation to the General Chapter.

NEWS FROM CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

The Work of Auteuil

When Auteuil began on 19 March 1866, it was not a work of the Holy Ghost Congregation. Abbé Louis Roussel, a Vincentian Priest, saw a street urchin scavenging in the wastebins. He invited him to come with him for lodging. A week later, he invited five others. Street urchins were then considered as vagabonds and virtually outside the protection of the law.

The first house which Abbé Roussel bought to house forty of those boys, was in fact in Auteuil which was then a village in the suburbs of Paris. The Vincentians could not take on the project. Abbé Roussel left his Congregation and so Auteuil became the responsibility of the Archdiocese of Paris.

On the retirement of Abbé Roussel, our Congregation was asked to help but were unable. It was then offered to the Salesians. St. John Bosco came in person to examine the project but responded negatively. In 1923, the Spiritans were again approached. This time they accepted with Fr Brottier as Director. Auteuil is not a Spiritan work in the technical sense: it is a work of the Archdiocese of Paris which is managed by the Congregation.

Why Spiritans became involved

The missionary movement was growing and Fr Brottier saw Auteuil as having possibilities for evangelisation. Although the work had serious financial problems, Auteuil was publishing a well known newspaper which was the first Catholic Newspaper of its kind in France. Fr Brottier being practical as well as spiritual saw the printing press as an important tool for mission animation. He established Auteuil as a Foundation with legal rights and put the apostolate under the patronage of Sainte Thérèse. It was established as a District in its own right and up to the 1970s, the Directors were Spiritans.

Auteuil Today

In 1976, the Project was re-evaluated. As a result, the District of Auteuil ceased to exist and was re-integrated into the French Province. The Director is now replaced by a Directorate of three, comprising a Director and his Assistant who are laymen: the third is a Spiritan. The Directorate form a team and meet on a regular basis, with the Directors of four Departments - Communications, Accompanying, Finance and Personnel, - to advise in the running of the work and to ensure its unity.

The work of Auteuil caters for 4,500 students, mainly male but also female, in 30 houses throughout France. They comprise 47 nationalities of different religions. The ages of the students range from three to twenty five years.

Auteuil aims to help youth from dysfunctional homes or who have no parents or who have problems of social adjustment. Only those who come of their own accord are accepted. The youth live in "houses" of ten to fifteen, each with its own "House-Person." Each group organises its own life. The students are taught to be progressively responsible and self-reliant. It is hoped that this experience will restore their confidence, self respect and initiative.

Accompany: The service to the young can be summarised in four verbs - to welcome, to educate, to train and to integrate. All those aspects come together under the term

"to accompany", to have a "soul friend". Each student, from the time he/she enters to the time he/she leaves, is accompanied and helped to achieve his/her goal in life. Contact continues with students after they leave. Auteuil is a place to which each can return and where each will always be welcomed.



Fr Savoie with some students

The curriculum covers

a vast range of subjects. Training responds to the needs of the young as well as of society. The services of a professional group is available to advise on where manpower is most likely to be needed in the future. Up to recently, the alumni of Auteuil had no difficulty in getting employment. This is no longer the case because of the unemployment in the country as a whole.

Personnel: All personnel are expected to be both professionally competent and to be motivated by the ethos of Auteuil and inspired by the Gospel.

Finance: Fifty per cent comes from the social services and the remainder from gifts. Auteuil has "reconnaissance social" which means that it is approved by government as making a contribution to the country and as such it can get grants and bequests. Financial control is very sophisticated. All the houses are electronically connected and there is permanent contact between the houses and the Central Administration in Paris. Accounting is done professionally by a group who ensure that everything is correct and legal.

Pastoral: Pastoral care is not solely the responsibility of "Centre Pastorale à Brottier" but permeates every activity. The "House-Person" is responsible for the pastoral care of those in his/her care. He/she is helped by the Chaplain or by the full-time pastoral worker and the pastoral team.

premises in south London. *Kairos* has been progressing ever since, acquiring more houses, bringing in more people from the streets and expanding the group of those working in the project. Today they have 11 "move-on" houses and function as an independent entity, having been set up as such in 1992.

Kairos has gained a fine reputation over the years and many people are referred there by social workers and other professionals. A significant percentage of those who have benefited from the services of *Kairos* have re-established themselves back into society. The first priority is homeless people, many of whom have problems with drugs and alcohol dependency. Where necessary, new arrivals go through a process of detoxication and stabilisation. There are different houses and locations for the various stages in the project.

The Missionary Institute, London

The Spiritans were one of the seven missionary societies that founded the MIL and they have been very committed to its support since its inception in the late 1960's. Although of recent years there have been few Spiritan students in attendance, the Province of England has continued to contribute significantly to the academic and administrative staff of the Institute. At present, there are three confreres teaching full-time. The MIL is affiliated to Leuven University in Belgium and Middlesex University in England, so they have courses with both universities.

Sadly, the student numbers from the founding societies have declined in recent years as more of them have decided to train their members in their countries of origin. Other possibilities are being investigated; current plans include the

strengthening of the missiological content of the courses on offer, the introduction of evening classes and a new course in leadership. The intention is to open up more to lay people by offering courses that will enable them to take greater responsibility in the local Church. More options will also be made available at post-graduate level.



Some members of the Province

100 YEARS OF MISSION

Over the last 100 years, missionaries from the English Province have worked in many lands, including Tanganyika (Tanzania), Ethiopia, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Angola, Martinique, Haiti, Trinidad, Mauritius, Rodrigues, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Jersey, Pakistan, South Africa, USA, Switzerland, Cameroon, Congo, Kenya, Ghana and Papua New Guinea - to name but some.

In the last few years, the spiritan provinces of Europe have been invited to discern missionary areas and projects within their territory. It is evident from this brief survey that the Spiritans in England are convinced that there are no lack of missionary needs both abroad and in their own country. With the collaboration of confreres from the south and other circumscriptions in Europe, along with the dedication of a group of committed lay associates, the province is determined to do its best to answer these needs, trusting in the strength of the Holy Spirit who has inspired and strengthened them for the last 100 years.

Meeting of Spiritan Lay Associates

Spiritans associates have been a reality in our Congregation since the 1970s, above all (but not exclusively) in the northern provinces. The General Chapter of Itaci referred to them as "a gift", "an enrichment", "a challenge for the spiritan family", while that of Maynooth used the expressions "a grace", "a blessing", and "a source of spiritual, missionary and community renewal for the whole Congregation". In fact, Lay Associates are now an integral part of the spiritan family, sharing our life and mission by their life of faith and their missionary and apostolic commitments.

For the last 20 years in **North America**, at least two representatives from the different groups of associates in the region have met together each year. The aim is to share and deepen their commitment and discuss their organisation and the different works undertaken by their members. They are particularly committed to works of Justice and Peace: refugees, immigrants, young people and adults in difficult situations, inter-religious dialogue etc. Their meeting this year took place in the spiritan

centre at Montreal from the 23rd to the 25th of April. Basing themselves on the question of Jesus to Peter, "Do you love me?", they reflected on the quality of human relations in life in the family, in community, in society, in pastoral engagements



Participants at the meeting in North America

and also in spiritan missionary projects. They elected a delegate to represent them at the forthcoming General Chapter and examined ways to increase their unity in the region. Although the different groups already have their manuals of association with the Congregation, they approved a declaration on their mission which said, amongst other things: *"We see ourselves as a community gathered together under the strength of the Spirit; we give special attention to the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded in our society, and we work beside them in their efforts to free themselves from the deprivation in which they live"* (Declaration on mission). Their propositions are in line with the Chinese proverb, "It is better to teach a person to fish than simply to give a fish to them", or the other one, even more expressive, which says: "If you are coming to help us, it is not worth it; but if you are

coming so we can liberate ourselves together, then we can do something".

In **Europe**, the Lay Associates have had an annual meeting since 1997. Allowing for the different situation, context and history of each group, they discussed their work and looked together for common orientations and key-words which could bring them closer together. In recent years, some provinces have set up formation programmes for Lay Spiritans, a sure sign of hope and confidence for the future. Their meeting lasted from April 29th to May 2nd and was held in the spiritan house at Le Bouveret (Switzerland). They discussed the report that their representative will deliver to the General Chapter. The three Lay Associates who have been invited to attend the Chapter will be able to share their experiences, their hopes and plans with the assembled spiritan family.

NEWS ITEMS

FIRST APPOINTMENTS

Name	From	To
Jude MOMPOINT	Haiti	Guyane
Frantz VOLCY	Haiti	Puerto Rico
Emmanuel AGBER	WAP	WAP
Ekpaa MAALO	WAP	WAP

GENERAL CHAPTER 2004: Replacement/ additions to the list of participants

ELECTED DELEGATES

Ireland + US Irish: Colm REIDY replaces Michael BEGLEY.

SPECIAL INVITEES

Name	Region
Br. Joseph MBA	Nigeria
Joy WARNER	Canada

Decisions of the General Council

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, nominates Fr Stanislaus AUGUSTIJNS, of the Province of Belgium, as Co-ordinator of Spiritan Ministry with Refugees, Displaced Peoples and Asylum Seekers, for a mandate of three years, with effect from the 12th March 2004.

The Superior General with the consent of his Council, prolongs the mandate of Fr. Noel O'MEARA as assistant General Bursar for the service of fundraising and management of financial services, for a period of three years, with effect from the 19th March 2004.

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, confirms the election of Fr. Hugh DE BLACAM, as Superior of the District of Brazil South-West, for a mandate of three years, with effect from the 28th April 2004.

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, confirms the election of Fr Peter ADU as Superior of the District of The Gambia, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from the 15 June 2004.

The General Council prolongs the mandate of P. Gérard VIEIRA, as General archivist in Chevilly, for one year, until 31 August 2005.

The General Council appoints Fr. Gaudence MUSHI, as Director of the Information Service at the Generalate, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st September 2004.

The General Council appoints Fr. Jean-Gabriel BORNER, of the province of France, as Bursar of the Generalate community, for a period of three years, with effect from the 15 September 2004.

The General Council appoints Fr. Alain MBONZIMA, of the province of Central Africa, as Assistant General Secretary and Assistant to the Director of the Information service, for a period of three years, with effect from the 1st October 2004.

Services at the Generalate

Fr. Gaudence Mushi replaces Fr. Philip Ng'oja as Director of the Information Services. Born in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania in 1964, Gaudence was ordained priest in 1994. His first appointment was to a nomadic people of East Pokot, Kenya. Three years later, he joined the University of Duquesne where he graduated with a masters degree in communications and multimedia. In the middle of the year 2000, he returned to Kenya and was appointed school chaplain and teacher at St Mary's school department of computer studies, the posts he held until his nomination to the Generalate as Director of the Information Service.



OUR DEAD

11 April	Fr. Stephan SCHMITZ	Germany 78
30 April	Fr. Adrianus KRIST	N/Lands 88
03 May	Fr. Benoit AUDET	Canada 85
05 May	Fr. Antonius VERHOEVEN	N/Lands 92