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Libermann's Theological Anthropology and the Contemporary Context

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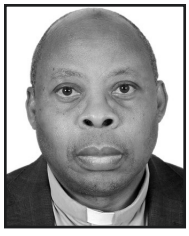

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Libermann's Theological Anthropology and the Contemporary Context

INTRODUCTION

"Black lives matter" is a very common slogan today. It has enlivened the struggle to see that Africans live dignified lives. It is amazing to note that Fr. Libermann had initiated this struggle in the 19th century when racial prejudice against Africans was very ripe, the lives of Africans blighted by the scourge of the slave trade and the dignity of the Africans trodden underfoot. This article evaluates Libermann's theological anthropology of *l'Œuvre des noirs* (project for the Blacks) in the context of the nineteenth century with its prejudices against Africans which can also be easily discerned from Libermann's writings[1] *L'Œuvre des noirs* was Libermann's missionary endeavour aimed at ameliorating the lives of Africans.

As we evaluate Libermann's theological anthropology, we are advised by Paul Kollman that any missionary work, the judgment of that work, and indeed of people who lived centuries before us is "a cautionary tale in a double sense."[2] First, as missionaries, we ought to be cautious of helping other people on terms set by ourselves. There was a danger that Libermann's missionary project would be paternalistic. Second, the challenge facing the one making the judgment on people who lived in the past runs the risk of being anachronistic. Kollman calls this "presentism," thus judging the past with present-day perspective or with condescension, "a particular temptation in a study of missionary activity with slaves."[3]

LIBERMANN'S LIFE EXPERIENCE

Libermann's concern for the Africans can be traced back to three fundamental moments in his life experience. First, he was born a Jew at a period of Jewish emancipation in France. Jews were looked down upon by wider society. Libermann's Jewish background and experience had a substantial impact on his attitude to those whose freedom was curtailed. Libermann made a distinction between freedom

and independence. People ought to be free but cannot be independent because we are necessarily dependent on each other. Independence may lead to egoism and individualism. Libermann wanted the Africans to have freedom and at the same time be inter-dependent with others.

Second, Libermann's conversion experience was sparked off by realizing that God is not confined to an ethnic group or to a culture or to a religion. God is for all people and had to be worshipped in freedom. God is manifested and revealed in each and every culture and religion. Libermann realized that God was for the Africans as well.

Third, Libermann experienced physical suffering. He suffered from epilepsy, which impeded his ordination to priesthood. Suffering has an educative value. Libermann was not only sympathetic and empathetic with the suffering of the Africans but also was in solidarity with them, at the same time, trying to imitate the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Libermann had a dessein*, "design" or "intention" for his mission.*

THE AIM OF *L'ŒUVRE DES NOIRS*

Jewish experience, conversion, and suffering transformed Libermann's life into a unique mission dedicated to the poor and marginalized Africans. The driving force behind l'œuvre des noirs, the direction it took, and the challenges it faced will be better understood by looking at what Libermann calls the dessein or motive behind this project expressed in his writings. It is clear that Libermann had a dessein, "design" or "intention" for his mission. At the beginning of his mission, on December 20, 1841, he writes to Firm-Régis Gamon, a trusted confidant, explaining to him the dessein of his mission.

> *Our intention [*dessein*] is to come to the aid of the black slaves or those who have been freed in the French and English colonies. These poor people are the most miserable on earth. They are totally ignorant of anything concerning religion. They have no idea of what ought to be done to be saved. Because of their ignorance, they are steeped in all kinds of vice…The vast majority are not married, but live like dogs and change their women at will.*[4]

Libermann had a good *dessein*, but the language he used and the understanding he had of Africans particularly at

the beginning of his project can be questioned. When Libermann and his companions conceived their project, l'œuvre des noirs, they had what Edmund Husserl calls the "natural attitude" against the Africans derived from the Western mentality at the time. Traces of the "natural attitude" can be read in the language Libermann used to describe West African society. Today, Libermann's language gives an impression of condescension and racial overtones. Expressions like, Africans "are not married," "live like dogs," and "are steeped in all kinds of vice," show that Libermann was influenced by racial Western stereotypes against African society.

Libermann was primarily a man of his age who interpreted carefully the signs of the time.

The expression "natural attitude" was coined by Edmund Husserl who noted that when human beings perceive things, they bring to their experience their biases and preconceived ideas to bear upon the phenomena, which he calls a "natural attitude" operating at the level of the subconscious. It darkens and blurs us from perceiving phenomena in their pure mode of "givenness." Hence, this "natural attitude"[5] has to be removed. He calls such a removal a "phenomenological *epoché* or suspension of the natural attitude." For Libermann the "phenomenological *epoché*" enabled him to see the world through the eyes of the poor because "the '*epoché* of the poor' enables us to unmask the political and social structures that oppress the poor."[6] We notice here that any reading of Libermann as "a man ahead of his time" or "beyond his time" should first be looked at with caution, and second, be coupled with a recognition that he was a man of his time.[7] Libermann was primarily a man of his age who interpreted carefully the signs of the time. He was also a critical voice of the structural injustices in the first half of nineteenth century Europe.

In 1846, Libermann showed a more positive outlook to the Haitians than to Africans in general. Referring to a failed mission there, he says, "We would have been able to show the detractors of the black race that not having a white skin does not mean that they are any less children of God than themselves, that they have the same nobility of soul and are just as capable of accepting faith and morality."[8] This clearly shows that Libermann's reading of the situation of the African Haitians had changed significantly, a change that demonstrates his conversion to be a lifelong process.

LIBERMANN'S MÉMOIRES

A more refined perspective of Libermann's motives is found in the *Mémoires* he addressed to *Propaganda Fide* in Rome seek-

ing authorization to start his missionary project *l'Œuvre des noirs*. These *Mémoires* show a development in thought with regard to his perspective of Africans. On 28 March 1840, Libermann submitted his first *Mémoire*. In it, he and his companions knowing that there was much suffering, humiliation, and contradictions that awaited them, resolved to give themselves to the Lord, "for the salvation of Black People, who are the most unfortunate, the furthest from salvation, and the most abandoned in God's Church."[9] They would be open to mission among the "Blacks" anywhere in the world, but in the beginning, their primary focus would be Haiti and the Island of Reunion. They were to live in community and by community life inspire vocations for the local clergy.

To say that Africans are "furthest from salvation" is an idea not tolerated today because it has racial overtones and exaggerates the misery of Africans. Nevertheless, Libermann used it to build a case that there was an urgent necessity to take on this mission of evangelization. The slave masters and those who participated in the slave trade would be the ones who were "furthest from salvation" because by their acts of injustice, they had distanced themselves from their fellow human beings who were created in the image and likeness of God, and at the same time, they had alienated themselves from God.

This Mémoire *proposed that catechists should receive minor orders,*

A more positive outlook to Africans is found in Libermann's second *Mémoire* of November 1844, in which he calls for the training of indigenous clergy. The formation of the indigenous clergy is reiterated and developed in his third *Mémoire* dated 15 August 1846. It is by far the longest and most important one, calling for the establishment of schools so that Africans may be trained as teachers, farmers, catechists, and artisans in a number of trades. This *Mémoire* proposed that catechists should receive minor orders, an idea which some have interpreted to show that Libermann was ahead of his time.

LIBERMANN'S RULE OF LIFE

In 1840, Libermann wrote a *Provisional Rule of Life* after receiving the good news that he could start to work on his project. This *Rule* underwent several revisions until the 1845 *Rule* which was then used in the formulation of the 1849 *Règlements* (Rules) after the merger with the Spiritans. The 1849 *Rule* became the foundation of future *Spiritan Rules*. Three important elements in Libermann's *Rule* were the hallmark of his understanding of human beings,

particularly those marginalized and enslaved. First, the sanctification of missionaries is important for the ministry. Evangelization begins with the evangelizer. As a Latin axiom says: *Nemo dat quod non habet* (One cannot give what he or she does not have), a missionary must first preach to himself/herself. Conversion like salvation is for every person. We all need God's grace.

Second, missionaries should do their ministry out of charity. This means that they had to respect the people whom they evangelized.

the Holy Spirit does not give straightforward answers to all our questions.

Third, missionaries should be humble. There was a danger of missionaries seeing themselves as superior to Africans, going to Africa to assist "poor Africans." This approach often generates paternalism. In addition, Libermann discouraged a *tabula rasa* approach to mission that was so common during his time. Libermann had come to know that the condition of slaves was a human tragedy. He had sympathy and pity for them. He noticed that although slaves had a right to baptism and, indeed many were baptized, they *needed to practice their religion in freedom*. They needed emancipation not only *in law* but *in fact* as well. They needed liberty that would restore their true human dignity as children of God. Libermann anticipated that the emancipation of slaves in French colonies was close at hand; but this emancipation he argued would be detrimental to them if they were not prepared morally.

It was also very clear to Libermann at the beginning of his mission that this work was a work of the Holy Spirit. He was aware that the Holy Spirit does not give straightforward answers to all our questions. "When the Holy Spirit inspires a project, hardly ever does He give the whole scheme from the outset. It is only as the work develops that this is given. However, the whole project is enshrined in the principle by which he inspired the author of the project."[10]

Inasmuch as the crucial anthropological question is the nature of a human being in search of God's salvation, Libermann's primary focus was God's salvation for the marginalized Africans. He realized that a human being is a social and cultural being who has to relate and interact with others. This then widened his scope of salvation to that of service. As Bevans points out, "salvation is ultimately about service, about identifying with God's saving mission in the world." He continues: "Such an understanding of salvation implies an anthropology that is certainly holistic but places its main emphasis on human beings' transcendent, spiritual dimension. Full humanity is achieved not only through economic security or political

autonomy, but also and most fundamentally through communion with God in Christ and transformation by the Gospel."[11]

LIBERMANN'S MISSION ANTHROPOLOGY

The nineteenth century understanding of the human person dichotomizing body and soul eventually influenced the outlook on mission and people at the margins. The purpose and value of the body was to be a "vehicle of the soul."[12] This dualistic anthropological understanding was closely connected to the ecclesiological notion of an ideal person. An ideal person was one within the visible Catholic Church outside of which there was no salvation, extra ecclesiam nulla salus. This led to a twofold missionary anthropological strategy, "to save souls and establish the church."[13]

Mission today aims at holistic human liberation.

Mission today aims at holistic human liberation. Mission is not just to save souls for heaven or to establish churches, but as Koren points out, "to announce Christ the Saviour whose whole life was a revelation: it showed that it is really possible for us human beings to begin to live together as God's loving sons and daughters… ."[14] Libermann's mission was basically a mission aimed at establishing a strong bond of relationship with Africans enslaved by various forces.

At the time when Libermann and his companions were planning l'œuvre des noirs in 1839, slave trading in France was still governed by the "*Code Noir*" or "Black Code" which was issued by Louis XIV in 1685, revised in 1724, and implemented until 1848 when slave trading was outlawed in France after a Socialist Revolution. "*Code Noir*" gives the slave owners total power over the slaves, including branding, mutilation, and using the lash.[15] Libermann and his companions anticipated that the emancipation of slaves in French colonies was close at hand, but this emancipation they argued would be detrimental not only to the slaves but to wider society as well if the slaves were not prepared morally. They did not want a repeat of the experience in Haiti where emancipated slaves vandalized French property.[16]

Paul Kollman says that Libermann was a "committed abolitionist," but the Catholic Church in France tended to be against abolitionists because of their anti-clerical outlook.[17] He notes that many of Libermann's missionaries in French colonies advocated abolition, linking "worldly freedom and the possibility of eternal life."[18] It is true that Libermann was against slav-

ery, but his abolitionist stance has to be qualified. Arsène Aubert argues that Libermann was not an abolitionist but rather encouraged his missionaries to be prudent in dealing with slave masters.[19] In 1840, Libermann composed a *Rule* for his society in which he wrote:

> *The missionaries will be the advocates, the supporters, and the defenders of the small and weak against their oppressors. When faced with such situations, the love and strength of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, must increase in them. But their actions must be inspired by a gentleness and prudence which their Master will give them if they are faithful.*[20]

Libermann calls for prudence in dealing with situations of injustice.

We can notice here that Libermann calls for *prudence* in dealing with situations of injustice. He continues in the same *Rule*:

> *They will do all they can to establish this Christian charity between the rich and the poor, the whites and the blacks, so that all will see one another as brothers in Jesus Christ and overcome the disdain and indifference on the one side and the jealousy and hatred on the other. But this requires great prudence or all could be lost.*[21]

Libermann was more of a pacifist than an abolitionist. Even though we can say today that by not confronting the slave masters, Libermann kept a blind eye to the structural injustice of slavery. At the same time, we have the practical situation he had to deal with. He realized that conversion was for everyone. The evangelizers needed metanoia (change of heart) to have the Spirit of Christ so that they could minister to the afflicted with love. The slave owners needed metanoia to treat slaves with brotherly and sisterly love and eventually set them free. The slaves too needed metanoia first, to the light of Christ, and second, to desist from carrying out vengeance on the perpetrators of injustice.

Libermann believed that the hour had not only dawned to preach the Gospel to Africans, but also the time had come for the perpetrators of injustice to realize that Africans were children of God. On 2 November 1846, he wrote a long and important letter to Pierre Northum Percin whom he was sending to Haiti where Eugène Tisserant had tried unsuccessfully to establish a mission for the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary between 1843 and 1845. Libermann outlined the vision of the mission in Haiti.

One of the objectives was to expose the injustices done to African Haitians.

> *There was an even stronger reason why I was keen to undertake this work: if we could have made a foundation in the Republic, I am sure it would have been very successful. After a few years, we would have been able to expose to the world the calumny and bad faith of those who were denigrating such a large number of people. We could have destroyed the ridiculous prejudices of a handful, who only think of their own ambitions and interests, to the detriment of millions of people created in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. I am convinced that we could have proved to the detractors of the African race that not having a white skin does not mean that they were any less the children of God, that their souls are less noble, that they are less capable of receiving the faith, Christian morality, and the principles and practice of civilization. In other words, we would have shown them that the colour of one's skin in no way denotes any inferiority.*[22]

The French system of assimilation encouraged people in the colonies to adapt to French culture and language in exchange for French citizenship.

Libermann proposed the establishment of a local church as one of the ways to destroy the prejudices of those who looked down on Haitians. The church in Haiti should no longer be considered a missionary church but rather an official and regularized church with a resident bishop like the churches in Europe.

LIBERMANN'S CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

During the time of Libermann, French Catholic missionary zeal had drawn on nationalistic pride to generate an obsessive urgency to reclaim the lost souls for the salvation of souls (le salut des âmes).[23] Libermann was aware of a nationalistic pride that influenced French missionaries to consider their culture as the "standard" one, and at the same time, to look down on other people's cultures. The French system of assimilation encouraged people in the colonies to adapt to French culture and language in exchange for French citizenship. Libermann, on the other hand, called on his missionaries to assimilate African culture.

Libermann is widely known for his teaching on inculturation even though his cultural identity kept on changing. He grew up in a Jewish ghetto, began learning Hebrew as early as five

The relationship which Libermann had within the African context widened his horizon and his outlook on culture and spirituality.

years of age, and reading the Torah, and later the Mishnah, and Talmud commentaries on Jewish laws. He spoke Yiddish, which he wrote in Hebrew characters. Libermann engaged with European culture when he was twenty years old and at Metz studying to become a Rabbi where he secretly learned French, Latin, and read the Classics. After his conversion, Libermann acclimatized to French culture and devoted a great deal of his private time improving on his competency in French. During his seminary and novitiate experiences, Libermann imbibed the spirituality of the French School with its dualistic tendencies that influenced his outlook on life.

It was after Libermann's seminary and novitiate experiences that his earlier "Jewish spiritual attitude became again predominant in his outlook."[24] The relationship which Libermann had within the African context widened his horizon and his outlook on culture and spirituality. As Koren points out, Libermann was both Jew and Christian. As a Jew, he could see God in each and every event of his life, and as a Christian, he "wished to live under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, manifesting himself in the concrete situations of life."[25] Holiness was to be sought in the real situations of life, not by shying away from them in some secluded places. The real situations of life presented themselves in the missions where structures of injustice thrived and people's rights were abused and denied. All these sad situations had to be challenged by the Gospel message.

Libermann's teaching on inculturation outshines the mentality of many of his contemporaries. He respected all cultures and invited his missionaries to be flexible in adapting to each and every culture. Libermann's teaching on culture shows that he was transformed by his experience of the African mission. He found himself in the position of responsibility when he was visited at the Eudist novitiate by Maxime de la Brunière, one of the initiators of *l'Œuvre des noirs*, to convince him to take leadership of this project. In his acceptance letter to Le Vavasseur of 28 October 1839, Libermann referring to de la Brunière says: "de la Brunière is all black," and goes on to say, "I will offer Holy Communion for our dear Black people on the feast of all the Saints."[26] This is a clear indication that Libermann was beginning to be influenced by the African mission that would transform him for the rest of his life. He too, like de la Bruniére, became "black" and instructed his missionaries to be "black with the Black."

In a long letter to his missionaries in Dakar, Libermann outlined the attitude of his missionaries to those they sought to evangelize.

> *Do not act according to what you see in Europe nor according to European customs. Get rid of Europe, its customs, and its spirit. Become black with the Blacks, and then you will know them as they should be known and not the way they are known by the Europeans. Let them be themselves. Become their servants. As servants, adapt to their customs and their way of life. Do all this with the aim of improving them, sanctifying them, ennobling them, and finally forming them into God's people. That is what St. Paul means by becoming all things to all in order to win all for Christ Jesus.*[27]

Libermann's missionaries were to rid themselves of French nationalistic pride.

This is one of the most quoted statements of Libermann's writings. It is indeed a very strong statement at a time when what was "black" was demonized. Libermann's missionaries were to rid themselves of French nationalistic pride that often looked down on other cultures. Libermann called upon his missionaries to learn and be immersed in the culture of the people to whom they were ministering. The purpose of inculturation is to ennoble people and make them aware that they are God's people. It makes them aware of their human dignity. Those who were evangelized needed ennoblement, which would help them to become self-regulating, self-reflective, autonomous individuals, whose commitments derive from voluntary choices.

Christy Burke points out: "People are not, must not be thought of, as 'objects.' Hence, to know a person is to establish a relationship with such a person … In the final analysis, the missionary is concerned with helping, but those who are being helped are never the 'objects' of his care."[28] As already noted, there is always a danger that a good work of charity may become paternalistic. That is the reason why Libermann calls upon his missionaries to be servants of those they are called to minister thus imitating Jesus who came not to be served but to serve (Matthew 20:28). As servants, they were to listen to the other and allow themselves to be transformed by the other. To a missionary who took pride in resisting a French military officer he wrote, "Those who are charged with the salvation of people should know how to adapt to others without, however, being broken or breaking others."[29]

Libermann's attitude on inculturation was part of his general attitude of tolerance and prudence noted earlier concerning the liberation of slaves.

LIBERMANN AND THE FORMATION OF THE LOCAL CLERGY

The success of the missions depended not on expatriate missionaries but on the establishment of the local clergy.

Libermann was aware of the value and importance of seminaries for the Church. He had lived in seminaries for twelve years. He had assumed charge of the Seminary of the Holy Spirit in Paris at the time of the fusion of his congregation with that of the Holy Ghost in 1848. He knew that his missionaries were doing a commendable ministry on the missions. However, for him, the success of the missions depended not on expatriate missionaries but on the establishment of the local clergy. According to Paul Coulon, the origin of this idea can be traced back to Libermann's friend, Fr. Jean Luquet (1810-58), a member of the Foreign Missions of Paris and missionary in Pondicherry, India.[30] Luquet was secretary of a diocesan synod of Pondicherry which produced a document entitled *Éclaircissements sur le synode de Pondichéry*. This document has striking similarities with Libermann's 1846 *Mémoire*. It called for the establishment of episcopates in mission territories and the training of indigenous clergy. Luquet was chosen by Propaganda to be the principal editor of the Pontifical Instruction, *Neminem Profecto* which called for the establishment of local episcopates and the training of local priests in the missions.

Libermann knew of many flourishing missions in the past that collapsed because they depended almost exclusively on expatriate clergy. There were already ruined missions in Angola and Congo where the Capuchins alone had more than four hundred missionaries in the sixteenth century.[31] His 1846 *Mémoire* referred to Angola.

> *Religion once prospered there. There were then the beginnings of a civilization. But now the country has reverted to barbarism. Blacks are therefore fickle and committed to their state of barbarism… We believe, however, that this lapse is not due to something inherent in the people, but rather in the policy being followed in the establishment of the mission... The early missionaries …must have made manifold conquests for Jesus Christ and his Holy Church …and produced numerous Christian communities, but perhaps without using*

sufficient means to consolidate the fruits of their labors by giving to these communities the stable force of a Church.[32]

The formation of local clergy was for Libermann a *sine qua non* for the success of the West African Mission. In his 1844 *Mémoire* to Propaganda, Libermann proposed that Africans would be brought to Europe for instruction. Luke Mbefo points out that sending Africans to Europe to study may be seen by some nationalists as "colonial arrogance enshrined in their self-given task of showing the Blacks how human life is to be lived, the so-called 'white man's burden,' the colonial policy of the British, or to 'moralize' the noble savage as the French articulate it."[33] Despite this reservation, Mbefo is of the opinion that it was necessary for Africans to learn "European ways" to master their own destiny.

Libermann realized that humanity shines brightly in the poor and abandoned.

CONCLUSION

Far from being a hagiology, this study of Libermann's theological anthropology has tried to situate him in the Sitz im Leben of the nineteenth century with its prejudices against Africans. Some of Libermann's teaching give an impression of condescension. However, our main purpose was to substantiate that despite the racial prejudices Libermann had against Africans, his relationship with Africans through his missionaries transformed him to see them as children of God in need of God's salvation. Libermann realized that humanity shines brightly in the poor and abandoned. They are a sign that being human is not a matter of what a person has but rather what kind of person he or she is. The face of abused Africans offered Libermann an indelible character to his mission, and convinced him that the culture of Africans is of great worth. As Elochukwu Uzukwu points out, Libermann was "penetrated and grasped by the *humanum*; this led to his profound trust in the value and giftedness of each human group, especially the most oppressed Blacks."[34] The *humanum* of Africans touched him and converted him to dedicate his life to the oppressed.

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ABBREVIATIONS

LS *Lettres Spirituelles du Vénérable Libermann*. Paris: Librairie Poussielgue Fréres, 1828-51. 4 Volumes. Referenced as LS followed by volume and page.

ND *Notes et Documents relatifs à la vie et à l'œuvre du Vénérable François-Marie-Paul Libermann, Supérieur Général de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit et du Saint-Cœur de Marie,* edited by P. Adolphe Cabon. Paris: Maison-Mère, 1929-1941. 13 Volumes. Referenced as ND followed by volume and page.

ENDNOTES

1. During retreats I have conducted about Libermann, I have encountered serious dissatisfaction and lack of interest in Libermann when I give disturbing quotations in Libermann's writings. I believe that the truth should stand out and Libermann should not be judged using present day standards. We are also living in an age of racial and gender sensitivity as far as language is concerned. Yet racial prejudice continues to exist.
2. Kollman, Paul V., "Evangelization of Slaves: A Moral Misstep?" *Spiritan Horizons* 2 (2009), 53.
3. Kollman, Paul V., *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005, xxii. Author's italics. Cf. Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 2nd edition Harmondworth, UK: Pelican, 1968.
4. ND III, 76. Translation by Burke, *Morality and Mission: Francis Libermann and Slavery 1840-1850*, 36. Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 1998. The word *dessein* is translated as "intention" here.
5. Dermot, Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology.* New York: Routledge, 2000, 11. Author's emphasis in italics.
6. Smith, David L., "Libermann's Spirituality: A Spirituality of Presence." *Spiritan Horizons* 3 (2008), 18.
7. Smith, David L., "The Spirituality of Francis Libermann: A Man Beyond His Time." *Spiritan Horizons* 1 (2006), 15.
8. ND VIII, 333. Cf. Letter to Percin, November 2, 1846.
9. ND II, 69.
10. LS III, 158.
11. Bevans, Stephen B. and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005, 345.
12. Kollman (2005), 63.
13. Bosch, David J., *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998, 331.
14. Koren, Henry, "Faith, Science and Evangelizing the Poor," *Essays on the Spiritan Charism and on Spiritan History*. *Spiritus* (1990), 73.
15. "The *Code Noir* (The Black Code)" http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/335/ (accessed on January 7, 2021).
16. What Libermann and companions were endeavoring to do also served French colonial interests. A violent revolution similar to the one in Haiti

was detrimental to French colonial interests, so they wanted a "smooth" transition from colonial occupation to independence but on French terms.

17. Kollman (2005) 62, 65. Kollman is also critical of the first Spiritan missionaries to East Africa for departing from Libermann's abolitionist approach to slavery. Kollman analyzes the strategy of these missionaries which he says was "morally dubious" because among other reasons, they never declared the ex-slaves free and used slavery as an opportunity to win converts to Catholicism.
18. Kollman (2005), 65.
19. Aubert, Arsène, "Libermann in Conflict With Authorities," *Spiritan Horizons* 5 (2010), 3-18.
20. ND II, 256. Cited by Arsène Aubert, "Libermann in Conflict with Authorities." 4. *Règle Provisoire*, First Part, Chapter IX, art. VI. This article is reiterated in Libermann's 1849 Rule (ND X, 517) and in the present *Spiritan Rule of Life*, 14.
21. ND II, 256. *Règle Provisoire*, First Part, Chapter IX, art. XIV.
22. ND VIII, 334.
23 . Kollman, Paul V., *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998, 48.
24. Koren, Henry, "Spiritan Educational History since 1848." 1990, 132.
25. Ibid.
26. ND I, 661.
27. ND IX, 330. My Italics.
28. Burke, Christy, *No Longer Slaves*. Dublin: Columba, 2010, 110.
29. ND VII, 161. Cited by Burke (2010), 121.
30. Coulon, Paul, Paule Brasseur and Others, *Libermann 1802-1852: Une pensée et une mystique missionnaire.* Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 1988, 383-455.
31. Koren, Henry, *The Spiritans: A History of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.* Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University, 1958, 165.
32. ND 8, 234f. Cited by Koren, Henry, *The Spiritans: A History of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit*, 165.
33. Mbefo, Luke, "The Intentions of Venerable Libermann." *Spiritan Horizon*s 5 (2010), 119.
34. Uzukwu, Elochukwu E., "Inculturation and the Spiritan Charism." *Spiritan Horizons* 2 (2007), 52.