



1863: Lavigerie institutes the Religious Week of Nancy (meeting between bishops, priests, religious, laity)

1880: Foundation of Mulweva (Haut Congo). The station is suppressed on January 3, 1885.

Letter to the Superior General, Father Bridoux (28th November 1883)

My dear Father,

Two serious reasons push me to want to have Father Leblond with me here in Tunis for a few weeks. The first of these is my wish to complete, as quickly as possible, some work I have given to Fathers Grussenmeyer and Flecher, as well as Fathers Delattre and Federlin, to further the cause of the Mission.

It has pained me, in fact, to notice that in our various houses, in spite of the instructions of the Rule, it is so difficult to find books to give to the missionaries, the scholastics or the novices, which deal with the history of the early Church in Africa, and which give them, in particular, an overall picture of that history. The reason is that such a history of ancient Christian Africa does not exist in French. But, according to an old proverb: *Ignoti nulla cupido* and if we do not have a good knowledge of these ancient and beautiful souvenirs of Africa, we are not so attached to her, we are not so keen to revive her.

Given the fact that my sickness is making it impossible for me, for some considerable time no doubt, to go running around outside, this is why I wanted to gather the necessary material with which to compose a detailed history of early Christian Africa. In my estimation, I reckon there is enough documentary material to write a history of the early Church in Africa in six or eight volumes in 8-format, like those of Rhorbacher. To these could be added a history of the African missions in this century by bringing together in one place everything that has been printed in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith or in the Annals belonging to each congregation.

We have begun the work of collecting and classifying these documents. Although there are already five of us, including myself, working on this, we feel that one more is needed to help us; and I can only see Father Leblond in your Society who, given

his disciplined mind and his ability to write, would be up to this task and could give me some useful help.

The second serious reason why I wish to have this Father near me for a time are the justifiable complaints made to me, as they have been made to you also, by the members of the Propagation of the Faith about the paucity of relations that have been sent to them for some time now. If this continues, some of our grants will surely be cut.

Of course, it is Father Leblond who is designated to maintain these relations; but I must guide him in this work, since I alone have all the pertinent and necessary documents to hand and I alone know exactly what must be said under these circumstances. It is therefore essential that Father Leblond comes and spends some time here with me.

I think he will be willing to come, and I also think that it will be easy for you to replace him with Father Bresson who has acted as secretary in the past and could take on these duties along with those of general procurator for a time. So, I ask you, dear Father, to submit my wishes to the Council immediately and to telegraph me its decision. I wish to be informed without delay, so that from my side I can make the necessary arrangements. I shall, of course, meet all the expenses incurred by this move and for Father Leblond's stay here. He may come either by land or sea, as he wishes, providing the Council agrees to my request.

Farewell, dear Father. Yours most affectionately and devotedly in Christ Our Lord.

