Rome and the Catholic Church in British West Africa

A case study

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The argument

In the last half of the 19th century, there were two movements within the Catholic Church which were significant for its future development: ultramontanism and centralisation in Rome.

Ultramontanism (looking beyond the mountains from cis-Alpine Europe towards Rome), was often expressed through a personal devotion to the pope and the unquestioning acceptance of his authority.

Centralisation in Rome, on the other hand, was expressed through the developments taking place in the curial offices whereby more and more decisions about local Church matters were being made in Rome.

A final issue that was discussed in the correspondence at this time was the use of baptismal formulas in the vernacular. The first request came from the Gold Coast. Planque asked if it is all right for the natives to be baptised in the vernacular, not knowing Latin, even though the formula literally translated into: “In the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Holy Spirit...” Planque wondered if this denied the unity of God missionary activity throughout the whole world.

In 1493, by the Treaty of Tordesillas, the pope had divided the world between Spain and Portugal, giving them the right to all the lands and people they discovered, as well as imposing on them the obligation to preach the Gospel and set up the church in those lands.

By the 1600s, neither Spain nor Portugal was able to provide the needed missionaries for their various territories. Moreover, with the realisation that the world was round, the line of demarcation was no longer a clear marker of rights and obligations.

There was confusion about jurisdiction not only in China, Japan and Vietnam, but also in India. The history of the Propaganda in these lands is a long and confused one, but it resulted in the Rites Controversy, which reached its climax in the 1700s.

Rites controversy

By the end of the 1700s, the missionary movement, due to the Rites Controversy and the suppression of

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the Jesuits, was grinding to a halt. Then, during the Napoleonic Era, the Propaganda in Rome was shut down and all its offices and archives were moved to Paris.

After the fall of Napoleon, these offices were returned to Rome. But the situation in the world had changed and there was a great deal of confusion regarding the authority of the Propaganda in Asia, Africa and the South Pacific.

Throughout the 19th century, the Propaganda gradually began to assert its authority in these territories. This case study is meant to describe how it came to exercise that authority and what its concerns were. What can be said about Africa could to a great extent also be said about Asia and the South Pacific.

As a preliminary remark, it can be mentioned that the role of the Propaganda in the development of the missionary work at that time was undergoing significant changes. For example, before 1900, when it came to making decisions about specific mission territories and their boundaries and about which congregations should be working in the territories, the Propaganda, which had the responsibility for this, was quite willing to be guided by the recommendations of the missionary congregations themselves.

For the most part it simply confirmed what the congregations recommended. It recognised that it was dependent on the good will of the missionary congregations and it was not always sure the congregations would accept their decisions (there were incidents in India where the Jesuits refused to recognise the authority of the Propaganda).

Pro-active role

However, by the 1900s, the Propaganda took on a different role, initiating decisions rather than just confirming them. The documents suggest that the missionary congregations played a significant role in this change. There were several incidents in the 1880s and 1890s where the Propaganda, confronted with a conflict between congregations about borders or about working in specific territories, instructed them to sort it out and let it know what had been decided.

It was the unwillingness of the congregations to come to an agreement and their appeal to the Propaganda that eventually led it to making decisions then, and later, without necessarily consulting the religious congregations beforehand.

Another change that took place was that, before 1900, the Propaganda was quite willing to give the faculties that were needed for celebrating the sacraments, especially confession, and the dispensions that might be needed for marriages to the major superiors of the congregations in Europe and let them delegate them to the person they chose in the mission.

But, by 1900, the Propaganda was no longer willing to do this. It insisted that it would give the faculties needed only to the designated superior of the mission and not to the superior general in Europe.

It insisted on this even though it caused great hardship for some of the missions. For example, in Ghana, because of illnesses caused by the climate, the Society of African Missions (popularly known as the Lyon Fathers—SMA), who worked in that country, had seven mission superiors in seven years!

At times the faculties only arrived after the death of the superior and so there were long periods when no one in the mission had the needed faculties.

A third and final change that took place happened before 1900. The Propaganda depended for its information about the missions on the superiors of the congregations in Europe. Sometimes it was well informed, sometimes poorly informed. But by 1900, it was not only asking for yearly reports from every prefect and vicar apostolic, but also was often responding to these reports with specific directions about actions to be taken in the missions—something it would not have done at the beginning of the 19th century. This is another example of the centralisation taking place.

Thus it can be seen that the centralisation of the mission work in the Propaganda during this period was a gradual process and the mission congregations contributed to this process. Details of this process can best be seen through a case study.

Case study

This case study covers the period from 1885 to 1900, viz, the period after the Congress of Berlin in 1884, which had recognised the claims of the various European powers in Africa and which divided West Africa principally between France and England.

The congress did not settle all matters. French and British commercial companies would continue to compete for trade and political influence up to and into the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, agreements on definitive borders between the countries being established would have to await further exploration and negotiation.

But by 1900, British control would be solidly established in countries we know today as Gambia,
Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Ghana)—countries that came to be known as British West Africa and which form the subject of this case study—even if much of the administrative machinery for these territories would only be developed in the first decade of the 20th century.

In summary, it can be said that between 1885 and 1900, the Propaganda played a significant role in the development of the Catholic Church in these territories in four ways:

- It continued to subdivide and modify what had been known as the Vicariate of the Two Guineas, which embraced all of this territory, into prefectures (eg. Gold Coast in 1879, Upper Niger in 1884 and Lower Niger in 1889) and assigned these territories to specific missionary congregations;
- It arbitrated disputes concerning boundaries between these missionary congregations’ territories;
- It controlled the appointment of prefects and vicars apostolic and made the decision about when an episcopal presence was needed; and finally
- It gave advice and directions to and responded to requests from the various superiors of congregations and of missions.

Each of these roles can be considered independently.

Prefectures and assignments

Between 1885 and 1900, the only new prefectures set up in British West Africa arose in Nigeria, while the prefecture in the Gold Coast was modified. These were entrusted to the Lyon Fathers (SMA) and the Spiritans (CSSP).

A study of the process involved in the setting up of these territories, exemplifies the relationship these congregations had with the Propaganda as well as the concerns of the congregations and the Propaganda.

Gold Coast (Ghana)

The Prefecture Apostolic of the Gold Coast had been sectioned off from the vast Vicariate of Sierra Leone in 1879 with the approval of the superior general of the Spiritans. When first established, it embraced both the Gold Coast and the Ivory Coast.

During this period, the Propaganda decided to separate the Ivory Coast from the Gold Coast and add some new territory to the Gold Coast so that the prefecture would correspond to the English colony and protectorate—a frequent criterion used by the Propaganda. This new territory was taken from Dahomey (but within the borders of the English territory) and was added in May of 1894.

It is interesting to note the reasons that Planque, the superior general of the Lyon Fathers, gave the Propaganda for requesting the separation of the Ivory Coast in February 1895:

- the size of the territory (there were 1,300 kilometres—780 miles—of coast);
- the inability of the missionaries who had been working in the Gold Coast since 1880 to begin operations in the Ivory Coast due to the great loss of personnel through death (the Lyon Fathers lost eight men in the first six years));
- the difficulty of communicating by land or sea, since one territory was under French rule and the other under English, so that the same boats did not stop at the ports of each territory.

At the same time, he proposed that the Prefecture Apostolic of the Gold Coast be made a vicariate, since great progress had been made since 1880 and there was need of an episcopal presence.

The Propaganda was persuaded to separate the two territories and did so by a decree of 28 June 1895, but it was anxious to have further information before making the Gold Coast a vicariate. It would not be made a vicariate until 1901, after the British had subdued the Ashanti and extended their protectorate further inland.

Nigeria

Up until 1889, Nigeria, which, until 1900, was administered by the Royal Niger Company, was ecclesiastically divided into two parts: the western part of the country belonged to the Lyon Fathers’ (SMA) Vicariate Apostolic of Benin and the eastern part to the Spiritans (CSSP) Vicariate Apostolic of the Two Guineas and Gabon.

Beginning in the early 1880s, the British continually advanced the exploration of this vast territory and gradually reduced part of it to a colony and part to a protectorate. This enabled the Catholic missionaries to move more freely through this territory and this demanded a new ecclesiastical organisation, which only the Propaganda could give.

In 1883, Planque proposed to the Propaganda that Dahomey, which was still part of the Vicariate of Benin, be separated from it and made an independent prefecture. He argued that not only was the present territory of the vicariate vast, but also the king of Dahomey was suspicious of missions in his territory being governed by someone from Lagos, since he feared an English invasion into his territory.

Planque was convinced that Dahomey had the
resources to develop into a flourishing mission. Moreover, he argued that this would leave the missionaries in Benin free to move into the interior of Nigeria, which was being developed by the English.

Planque wrote, "For I believe that in no other part of Africa is there a population so dense and so disposed to be led to the Gospel." This division was approved by the Propaganda on 20 May 1883.  

The following year, Planque asked the Propaganda that part of what now remained of the Vicariate of Benin, plus some additional territory, be set up as an independent Prefecture of the Upper Niger. It was land between the Niger and Benue Rivers, a territory as large as France and Spain put together.

Since some of that territory would be coming from that of the White Fathers (in the north) and the Spiritans (in the east), the Propaganda approached Lavergerie and Emonet, the superiors general of their respective congregations, and asked for their opinions.

Both agreed with Planque's suggestion, although they each proposed a slight modification in the boundaries proposed. Emonet was concerned that the Vicariate of the Two Guineas, "the oldest and without contradiction the most important," should not be too restricted, while Lavergerie pointed out that, although the boundaries proposed overlapped with the present territory of the White Fathers, he was happy about the extra workers in that part of the country. "God preserve me from a ridiculous jealousy in this regard," he wrote. The congregation approved of this new prefecture on 18 February 1884 and entrusted it to the Lyon Fathers.

Lack of personnel

However, by early 1887, Planque realised that his young seminary would not be able to provide enough missionaries for this vast territory and he wrote to this effect to the Propaganda.

The latter said it appreciated this frank statement and asked him to propose a division of the territory as well as a congregation to which a new prefecture might be entrusted.

But nothing more is heard of this matter until Planque's proposal to divide it into three prefectures in 1904, which was not acted upon; only in 1911 was it finally divided into two prefectures. In these cases, the superior general made these proposals to the Propaganda, but the congregation apparently had its own reasons, as the reasons for not acting on them are not articulated in the archival sources.

In 1885, after the establishment of the new Prefecture of the Upper Niger, the Vicariate Apostolic of the Two Guineas and Gabon had been reduced in size, but it still extended from the Benue River to the French Congo, making it a vast territory embracing English possessions in Nigeria, German possessions in the Cameroons and French possessions in Gabon.

Division suggested

In February 1889, the superior general of the Spiritans, Emonet, proposed to the Propaganda that the vicariate be broken up, with the English territory to be given as an independent prefecture to the Spiritans, the German territory to German subjects, and the French territory to remain in the hands of the Spiritans.

He pointed out that the Spiritan missions in Nigeria were flourishing and that it was difficult to administer this mission from Gabon.

The Propaganda was persuaded by these arguments but was concerned about whether or not the Spiritans could provide English-speaking missionaries for the territory of Nigeria. The Spiritan superiors assured the Propaganda that the missionaries they sent would be English-speaking, that this would cause no problems with the British government since the congregation already had a working relationship with the British government in Gambia and Sierra Leone and that the congregation would send British subjects as soon as they were available.

The Propaganda was persuaded by his arguments and thus approved of his proposal; the Prefecture of the Lower Niger was established 25 July 1889 and entrusted to the Spiritans.

Disputes about boundaries

As we have seen, the Propaganda, in the establishment of new prefectures generally followed the recommendations of the missionary congregations. However, there were times when boundaries had to be modified and, in case of conflict, the Propaganda had to play a mediating role. Let us consider how it proceeded in just one of these disputes.

A conflict between the White Fathers, the Spiritans and the Lyon Fathers was due to the fact that the southern boundary of the Vicariate Apostolic of the Sahara, entrusted to the White Fathers, was not only vague ("mountains of Kong, around 10 degrees Lat"), but it also had been established before the English had determined their northern boundaries for Nigeria and the Gold Coast where the other two congregations worked.
Bad feelings were already stirred up in 1899 when Hacquard, the vicar apostolic of the Sahara, without consulting or even informing the vicar apostolic of Benin, sent a telegramme to the English government saying that he would not allow the Lyon Fathers to establish a mission in his territory.

Pellet, the Lyon superior in Benin, was about to open a mission in the north at Ankar. He telegraphed Planque to find out if the mission was within their territory. He was assured it was and so he informed the Propaganda of his intention to establish the new mission.17

Cardinal Ledochowski, the prefect of the Propaganda, immediately wrote to Pellet and asked him to hold off on his action since the territory was under dispute.18 Pellet responded immediately and said he was surprised by Ledochowski’s letter. He complained that Hacquard had unilaterally interpreted the vague boundary at nine degrees (and not 10 degrees) latitude across the Gold Coast, Dahomey and Nigeria.

If the Propaganda supported him in this, he said, it would mean that Benin would lose the healthiest portion of its vicariate in which he hoped to build stations where his missionaries could recuperate (the average life-span of a missionary sent to Benin at the age of 25 was four years, seven months and 21 days).19

The cardinal wrote to Hacquard presenting him with Pellet’s arguments and asked him to suggest a more precise boundary.20 He also asked the heads of the missions to meet and come to some agreement.

But Pellet had been so hurt by the actions of Hacquard that he refused to deal with him.21 In the end, Hacquard agreed to abide by the boundaries established by the English in the case of Nigeria and the Gold Coast (ie. 11 degrees and 45 inches Lat N), but refused to budge with regards to Dahomey.

However, after having tried to get the congregations to settle this matter between themselves without success, the Propaganda simply determined that ecclesiastical boundaries would follow political boundaries.22

Appointment of prefects and vicars apostolic

The Propaganda also played an important role in the development of the church in British West Africa through its appointment of prefects and vicars apostolic. In most cases, Propaganda accepted the names recommended by the superiors general of the respective religious congregations; however, sometimes it raised questions or made up its own mind.

Before 1900, there were three vicars apostolic with concerns in British West Africa: one in Sierra Leone, the vicariate having been set up in 1858, one, whose vicariate had existed since 1872 (Senegambia—French Senegal and English Gambia) and one in Benin/Nigeria.

The method of appointing the vicar apostolic of Senegambia and prefect apostolic of Senegal (one office but two territories) was a complex one, since it involved the Propaganda, the French government and the missionary congregation. The history of their appointment is chequered; it will not be treated here.

A mission in British West Africa, that had a vicar apostolic at its head after 1891, was Benin (until then Benin had been governed by a pro-vicar—Planque—who resided in Europe). The mission was begun already in 1861 and entrusted to the Lyon Fathers. It is interesting to note that between 1871 and 1879 there were as many superiors as years. All but two of them quit and returned to Europe because of differences between themselves and Planque.23

The initiative to make Chausse a vicar apostolic with episcopal character, interestingly enough, came not from Planque but from the people of Lagos. Planque strongly recommended Chausse, the pro-vicar, who was 44-years-old at the time, and had been serving in Benin since 1871 and had been superior of the mission for a long time.

On 2 October 1890, Paul Pellet, the superior of the mission at Lagos, sent to Cardinal Simeone, the then-prefect of the Propaganda, a petition from the people asking that Chausse be made a bishop.

He mentioned that he and his confreres joined in this request and that such an action would be good for religion in that country. The request, he said, is made "in the name of the undersigned, of all the Catholics of the Benin missions and of all the people who still do not know the truth."

In the petition, they pointed out that since the mission was first founded at Lagos in 1858, it had made great progress, having by 1890 six stations, 12 schools, 17 priests, 19 sisters, 16 native school masters and 8,000 faithful.

They argued that creating a bishop for Benin would give a great impulse to this work:

Prestige has a great weight in the minds of the Africans and the episcopal dignity would give a great prestige to the Catholic religion here. This reason becomes the more forcible because the Protestants are going to have a bishop of their own at Lagos. Europeans will never be able to bring the immense (sic) countries of Africa to
Catholicism unless they be helped in their work by native clergy. We hope some day to see some of our children priests and missionaries. But we have not the means to send them to Europe, they will have to be instructed here, they will want a bishop to ordain them.24

They recommended Chausse for this office since he knew the people, their languages and their manners; was esteemed by the Muslims and Protestants; and was loved by the people. There are 165 signatures on the petition, many with Brazilian names.25

Having received this petition, Cardinal Simeon wrote to Planque on 3 December 1890 to ask his opinion on the matter26 and also to request a term of names of candidates, should they proceed to choose a vicar apostolic.27

In April 1891, the Propaganda met and approved of Chausse as vicar apostolic;28 the decree appointing him vicar apostolic was dated 25 April 1891.29

The Propaganda in this case simply followed the recommendation of the superior general. The choice of choosing his successor was much more complicated but the story cannot be told here.

Confusion shows new policy

The appointment of a prefect apostolic was made by the Propaganda according to the recommendation of the superior general. This was generally straightforward.

However, in the case of the Lyon Fathers working in Ghana, there was some confusion because, in the past, the Propaganda would appoint the superior in Europe as the prefect apostolic and allow him to designate the priest of his choice to have the faculties needed for the governing of the missions.

However, after 1885, the Propaganda wanted to appoint as prefect apostolic a priest on the mission recommended by the superior general and not the superior general himself. This caused a great deal of confusion, both because of the frequent turn-over of personnel and the deadly climate in Ghana, as well as because of Planque’s resistance to giving up the governance of the mission he had until then.

Thus, when Moreau, the first prefect apostolic of the Gold Coast residing in the mission, died in 1886, Planque wrote to the Propaganda and asked if the faculties reverted back to him.

He was told “no,” since the faculties had been given directly to Moreau.30 Planque then wrote saying that Moreau had not delegated the faculties to anyone else and asked once more that the faculties be given to him to be delegated to someone else; but, once again, the Propaganda sent the faculties directly to Moreau’s successor.31

Planque continued to ask the Propaganda to appoint him as prefect apostolic right up until 1895, but the Propaganda would not return to its old policy. A significant change had taken place in its style of administration.

A similar story could be told about the appointment of prefects apostolic for the Upper Niger. There were no such complications in the appointment of prefects apostolic for the Lower Niger, which was in the hands of the Spiritans; the Propaganda simply appointed the person recommended by the superior general of the Spiritans.

Guidance, advice and comments

The final role of the Propaganda in this centralising process can be considered as that of guiding, advising and correcting. Some examples of this have already been noted, eg, calling on religious congregations to negotiate disputes among themselves, recommending that ecclesiastical boundaries coincide with civil boundaries and deciding how faculties were to be distributed to superiors.

There were two ways in which they exercised this role: one was by way of comments on the reports
that were sent in by the vicars and prefects apostolic and the other was by way of a response to specific questions asked.

**Propaganda priorities**

The first detailed report from the Gold Coast was that prepared by Maximilian Albert in 1900. Cardinal Ledochowski was not only pleased with the report but went into some detail about the good things the missionaries were doing, especially in the field of education and the arrangements for ownership of property.

Interestingly enough the only caution he mentioned was that the mission must be careful not to go into debt. This perhaps was based on an experience the mission had in earlier times or the experience of some other mission, since there is nothing in the report that would merit such a comment.32

The first detailed report sent from Benin was also sent only in 1900 and prepared by Paul Pellet. The cardinal found much more to comment on in this report and in this way he does give the reader some sense of what the Propaganda considered important at this time.

He applauded the zealous action of the missionaries, but was concerned about the lack of religious discipline reportedly present among the missionaries; he therefore took steps to have Planque appoint a religious superior who would oversee this.

He told Pellet to continue to urge the missionaries to learn the native languages, since this was most important. Also, if it was impossible for the missionaries to come together regularly to discuss moral cases, then Pellet should try to do something by correspondence to make sure there was uniformity in teaching.

He was pleased that a higher school was established, which could become a seminary, but made it clear that he was not to seek special funds for this from the Propaganda. He also advised something that occurs quite frequently in the correspondence after 1885, when Europe had intruded itself into Africa—get a clear title to mission properties so that the government could not take them away. He also mentioned that as much as possible Catholics should attend Catholic schools.33

Two reports came into the Propaganda from the Spiritan territory of Lower Niger: one, from Reling, in 1896, and one from Pawlas, in 1899; neither of these reports followed the detailed questionnaire that had been sent them.

Commenting on Reling’s report, Ledochowski was obviously pleased with the new villages that were begun for ransomed slaves and promised him the financial support he would need for them.34

In response to Pawlas’ report, Ledochowski stated that he was impressed with the medical work that the missionaries were doing and praised him for the direct and indirect evangelisation that was being carried out.35

**Significant questions**

The other way in which the Propaganda exercised influence in the development of the African church was by responding to specific questions put to it. Although there were many questions addressed to it, the three most significant ones that seemed to engage the Propaganda during this period were: the Propaganda’s subsidisation of missions; the intrusion of missionary personnel into territory belonging to a different congregation; and the baptismal formulae used.

For the most part, the correspondence of the Propaganda is remarkably free of financial discussions during this period. The reason for this is that it had nothing to say about the funds distributed by the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, a lay organisation founded by Pauline Jaricot in 1822, and the Society of the Holy Childhood, also a lay organisation, although it had been founded by Bishop Forbin-Janson; the missions wrote directly to these organisations for funds. The Propaganda was only able to distribute funds raised by the Anti-Slavery Society, but strictly according to the purposes of that society. There is frequent reference to this in the correspondence.

A second kind of request to which the Propaganda had to respond and which led to the Propaganda having an impact on the development of the Church, was for mediation. About a year after the Prefecture of the Upper Niger was set up (1885), the Lyon Fathers thought it would be good to set up missions on the left bank of the Niger, even though it was Spiritan territory.

It seemed to be a propitious moment since Crowther and the Protestant missions had, in the eyes of these Catholic missionaries, lost some esteem among the people, and yet the Spiritans did not seem to be moving into this territory.

Poirier, the Lyon Fathers’ prefect apostolic of the Upper Niger, asked LeBerre, the Spiritan vicar apostolic of the Two Guineas and Gabon, if they could so act, but he received no response.

Planque then approached Barillec, the secretary general of the Spiritans in Paris; the latter was polite,
but said "no." So Planque then asked the Propaganda to mediate between them.36

Barillec must have immediately informed Eschbach, the procurator general of the Spiritans in Rome, about Planque's request, for Eschbach immediately dashed off a note to the Propaganda saying that the superior general intended to send missionaries shortly to the place where Planque wanted to start and so there was no point in the Lyon Fathers opening a station there.37

However, the Propaganda had been persuaded by a personal visit from Planque as to the advantage of beginning soon in the territory. So the cardinal prefect wrote to Emonet on 18 May 1885 and asked if he intended to send missionaries there or if for the salvation of souls Planque's men could work there.38

On June 3, Emonet responded that he did intend to send missionaries into that territory and had already made arrangements with LeBerre to proceed there.39 This information was passed on to Planque,40 who responded by return mail and promised to give the Spiritans information on the tribes that go back and forth—if they are indeed beginning there; however, he added that if they did not do so in a reasonable amount of time he would again ask the Propaganda to rule in their favour.41

Thus, it is clear that the Propaganda was guided by the recommendations of the superiors, but also that the congregations would not go against the decisions of the Propaganda.

A final issue that was discussed in the correspondence at this time was the use of baptismal formulas in the vernacular. The first request came from the Gold Coast. Planque asked if it was alright for the natives to be baptised in the vernacular, not knowing Latin, even though the formula literally translated into: "In the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Holy Spirit..."

Planque wondered if this denied the unity of God.42 He was told that the formula was valid and was asked to inform the prefect apostolic of this decision.43

Propaganda initiative

The second discussion of the period was actually initiated by the Propaganda. In his 1895 report on the Prefecture of the Upper Niger, Zappa mentioned that in cases of emergency they baptised using the formula in the vernacular which translated into, "I place the water of God in the name..."

He also mentioned that the catechists regularly used the formula in the vernacular which says, "I wash you (or rather I am washing you) in the name of the Father and of the First Born Son and of the Holy Spirit."44

In his response to the report, Ledochowski asked three questions about the formulas:

- Did "place water" imply "wash" in the vernacular?
- Was the person being baptised designated?
- And why was the "first-born" introduced?45

Zappa wrote and said he would send further information on the baptismal formula after he met with his conferees.46 On July 19, Zappa sent a detailed explanation of the formulae. He said that "I place water" came into the vernacular as a result of Anglican missionary activity many years ago and the natives continued to use it as a ritual for good health.

It would seem to connote baptism, he argued, by reason of its history but not of washing. He mentioned that the catechists did indicate the person being baptised; he had just neglected to mention it.

With regards to the term "first-born," he said, the word does not have a chronological meaning, but signified the right of succession. He said the missionaries just took the vernacular form they already found in use; they never thought of just using the word for Son, which certainly would be possible.47

The Propaganda sent this information on to the Holy Office, which decided that the formula using "first-born" was invalid and those people should be re-baptised with matter and form only. The formula "I place water" it considered doubtful and told the missionaries to rebaptise conditionally.48 These decisions were then communicated by the Propaganda to Zappa.49

Conclusions

This case study focussed on the role that the Propaganda and its two cardinal prefects during this period, Simeone and Ledochowski, played in the development of the church in British West Africa by determining territorial boundaries, assigning territories to religious congregations, appointing prefects and vicars apostolic and guiding the development of mission policies, but also contributed to the centralising tendencies.

This was not an unusual experience. The Propaganda was developing the same style of administration also in Asia and the south Pacific. This centralising authority of the Propaganda certainly provided certain advantages to the missionary movement as it went forward.
However, it also had the effect of reducing the authority of the missionary congregations and the missionaries in the field. The full impact of this development needs further study. However, it is clear from church history that the missionary movement also had an impact on the centralisation of the church in the curial office known as the Propaganda ■

END NOTES

1) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1880, f660
2) *Acta*, 285 (1895) f363
3) *Serie Romana*, 1886, f945
4) *Nuova Serie*, 73 (1895) f137-138
5) *Acta*, 265 (1895) f386
6) *Acta*, 272 (1901) f179-182
7) Car j’estime qu’aucun point de l’Afrique n’offre un population aussi dense et aussi dispose a se laisser amener au Saint Evangelie, *Acta*, 251 (1883) f240
8) Ibid, f238
9) le plus ancien de tous et aussi le plus important sans contredit, *Acta*, 253 (1884) f55
10) Dieu me preservere, a cet egard d’une jalousie ridicule *Acta*, 253 (1884), f56
11) *Acta*, 253 (1884), f.51: *Lettere et Decreta*, 1887, f29
12) *Acta*, 284 (1911) f207-211
13) *Acta*, 259 (1889) f214-215
14) *Serie Romana*, 1889, f.180,190; *Lettere et Decreta*, 1889, f313,383
15) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1889, f557
16) 22 December 1899—*Nuova Serie*, 214 (1901) Rub141, f266-287
17) 22 December 1899—*Nuova Serie*, 214 (1901) Rub141, f269
18) 27 February 1900—22 December 1899—*Nuova Serie*, 214 (1901) Rub141, f273-275
19) 3 April 1900—22 December 1899—*Nuova Serie*, 214 (1901) Rub141, f276-277
20) 22 December 1899—*Nuova Serie*, 214 (1901) Rub141, f294-295
21) *Acta*, 272 (1901) f192-198
22) *Serie Romana*, 1892, f521-529
23) *Serie Romana*, 1890, ff308-310
24) *Acta*, 270 (1899), f311-315
25) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1890, f808
26) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1891, 159
27) *Acta*, 261 (1891) f110-112
28) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1891, f334
29) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1886 f417
30) *Serie Romana*, 1886, ff1003-1004
31) *Nuova Serie*, 193 (1900) Rub141, ff546-547
32) *Nuova Serie*, 193 (1900) Rub141, ff476-477
33) *Nuova Serie*, 118 (1897) Rub 141, ff6-7
34) *Nuova Serie*, 168 (1899) Rub141, f163
35) *Serie Romana*, 1885, f904
36) 7 May 1885—*Serie Romana*, 1885, f906
37) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1885, f273
38) *Serie Romana*, 1885, f917
39) *Lettere et Decreta*, 1885, f342
40) *Serie Romana*, 1885, f920
41) 17 December 1884—*Serie Romana*, 1884, f884
42) 26 January 1885—*Lettere et Decreta*, 1885, f44
43) *Nuova Serie*, 118 (1897) Rub141, f28-27
44) 7 March 1896—*Nuova Serie*, 118 (1897) Rub.141, ff31-32
45) 29 June 1896—*Nuova Serie*, 118 (1897) Rub.141, f38
46) *Nuova Serie*, 118 (1897) Rub141, ff40-43
47) 23 February 1897—*Nuova Serie*, 118 (1897) Rub.141, f51
48) 12 March 1897—*Nuova Serie*, 118 (1897) Rub.141, f53