



White Fathers - White Sisters

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Front Cover - The Sultan of Zinder and elders, Niger

Back Cover - A Baptism

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EDITORIAL

We are already half way through 1998 and have reached our Novena issue. We invite you all to return your intentions to us in the envelopes provided for our annual Novena which will run from Saturday 13th. June (the Feast of St. Anthony) to Sunday 21st. June.

'Islam Through the Years' is the first part of an article which traces the development of Islam since its birth nearly fifteen hundred years ago. We follow the rapid spread of this fascinating religion, in its early years, and note the influence it has had in the whole world. As well as the historical journey there are information boxes on several pages - including pages 16 and 17 - which give more in depth information.

In the future it is hoped that we will be able to have more articles concerning the White Fathers' work with Islam and in predominantly Muslim countries. In this line, on pages 25 to 28, Fr. John MacWilliam tells us of his work in Algeria and adds an up-to-date dimension to the White Father vocation and the changing life of our Society.

An appreciation of the late Archbishop Christopher Munzihirwa is on pages 18 to 22. Here we see how an individual can be caught up in violence in the country where they live and become an innocent victim. Archbishop Christopher symbolises the suffering which the people of Central Africa have been going through for decades and poses the question 'when will it end and is the outside world really interested'!

In our prayers during the Novena this year let us not just remember our own intentions, but also those of all the peoples of Africa. This annual even unites all of us in a general concern for the Universal Church which the White Fathers try to build and support in places far from their homes.

**To Help Our Missionary Work
Please Remember Us In Your Will**

Where there's a will, there's a way

White Fathers

"I give to the **Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)** the sum of free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Father Provincial of the Society in Great Britain, who now resides at 42 Stormont Road, Highgate, London, N6 4NP, shall be a good discharge."

White Fathers' Registered Charity No. 233302

White Sisters

"I give to the **Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa (White Sisters)** the sum of free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Sister Provincial of the Congregation in Great Britain, who now resides at 25 Waldemar Avenue, Ealing, London, W13 9PZ, shall be a good discharge."

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Islam Through the Years - Part 1

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

An element of the White Fathers' ethos has always been our involvement with Islam. This goes back to our origins in North Africa and the work of Charles Lavigiére, the Founder, and the first White Fathers. We have had a continual presence in Tunisia and Algeria since those days and have been involved with Muslims in many ways - from the intellectual side of studies, to the ordinary every day contacts with people (see the article on page 25).

In this article we concentrate on the historical development of Islam as a political and religious force in North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Europe. As with any religion it is very difficult to give an idea of what Islam is and how it has developed over the years. It is a faith which permeates a believer's life completely and guides every action. In Islam there is no division between the religious and secular as the whole of life is a unity based on the 'community' and in surrender to the will of God (1). This may be seen in the reality that political life, religious and family life in Islam, are all one and have been throughout history. We have lost this unity to a certain degree in our Western Christianity, but these elements are a common factor to the 'people of the book' - Christians, Jews and Muslims - and have been strong in our faith at different times.

THE ORIGINS OF ISLAM

Islam has its origins in Arabia among the people who lived in Mecca around 610 A.D. (2). At that time the majority of the population were nomadic Bedouin Arabs. The merchants of the town controlled much of the caravan trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. These camel caravans passed along the west coast of Arabia so the towns on the route were

already open to many influences. The religion of the time was Semitic and the people worshiped a variety of deities though there was *al-Uzza*, 'the Mighty One', a supreme god. Mecca was an ancient pre-Islamic shrine and a place of pilgrimage which was centred on the *Ka'ba* and this helped in promoting trade. The Quraish clan looked after the *Ka'ba* which contained many statues of the local gods (2).

MUHAMMAD (570-632)

It was into this world that Muhammad ibn Abdullah was born in Mecca about 570 A.D. His father, Abdullah, died soon before he was born and his mother, Aminah, died when he was six years old. Abd al-Muttalib, his grandfather, looked after Muhammad until he too died, in 578. He was then taken care of by Abu Talib, an uncle who was head of the Hashimite branch of the Quraish clan. With such a background and upbringing Muhammad knew the local traditional beliefs and he was familiar with those of Jews and Christians who had settled near by. Muhammad had no formal education and could not read or write. Despite this he got a job managing the caravans of Khadija, a local business woman, whom he later married. Together they had two sons and four daughters. Muhammad felt ill at ease with the materialism and inter-tribal warfare of the surrounding area and often went to meditate in a cave on Mount Hira. Around 610, while he was meditating, Muhammad began to receive messages from God. He sincerely believed that these were the direct speech of God given to him by the Angel Gabriel and that his role was to be that of a prophet or messenger. The revelations which Muhammad received were later put together in the Koran (Qur'an). (3) The gist

ISLAM AND 'THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM'

Islam - *al-islam* - means the act of unreserved commitment (submission, resignation or surrender) and a Muslim is a person who makes such an undivided commitment to *Allah*. This faith is expressed in the 'Five Pillars of Islam' which are:

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH (SHAHADA): "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his Messenger".

This is repeated in daily prayer as a commitment to obey God and to follow his Prophet.

Allah is the one true, unique, merciful, creator and sustainer God in Islam. The greatest sin is *shirk* (blasphemy - the association of anything, or anyone, with God) and so there are no images of God or the Prophet in mosques. The Koran mentions twenty five *rusul* (prophets or messengers of God) including those of the Old Testament, Jesus and John the Baptist. Only Muhammad received the complete version and he is *the seal of the Prophets*.

PRAYER (SALAH OR SALAT): the compulsory prayers are said five times a day facing towards Mecca:

Fajr at dawn; *Zuhr* at noon; *Asr* at mid-afternoon; *Maghrib* in the evening; *Isha* during the night. There are also the Friday communal prayers at the mosque.

CHARITY OR THE GIVING OF ALMS: there are two forms of 'alms giving'. The legal *zakat* is a type of 'welfare tax' to support the needy of the 'community'. This is the minimum expected and is often calculated at one-fortieth (2.5%) of a person's income. The voluntary *sadaqa* (pillar of social action) is the other and is seen as being a way to atone for sins.

FASTING (SAWM) is undertaken during the ninth month of the year *Ramadan*. Adults refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and conjugal relations from dawn to sunset. Children and pregnant women are exempt. The intention is to cleanse the body; to have a time of reflection and thanksgiving, to foster obedience to God and unite the Muslims 'community'.

PILGRIMAGE (HAJJ): is the Pilgrimage to Mecca which is obligatory for every Muslim at least once in a life time (unless they cannot afford it or have ill health). The *Hajj* is undertaken in the month of pilgrimage (*Dhu-l-Hijja*) and is a time to find peace with oneself, with God and creation. When it takes place in other months it is called the 'little pilgrimage'.

Mecca is the holiest place of Islam due to it being the birthplace of Muhammad. It is the capital of Hejaz Province, Saudi Arabia, about 45 miles (72 kms.) from the Red Sea in the Wadi Ibrahim. Each year 2 to 3 million Muslims go on the *Hajj* to Mecca. At the centre of the city is the Al-Masjid-al-Haram Mosque which contains the *Ka'ba* and can hold 300,000 people. The *Ka'ba* is a square stone building which encloses the sacred Black Stone. Muslims believe that it was the first house of worship to be built and it was later rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael.

Medina (Al-Madinah) is the second holiest city of Islam with the tombs of Muhammad and Aaron. It is about 300 miles (485 kms.) north of Mecca near the Hejaz Mountains. Pilgrims on their way to Mecca visit and camp around the old walled city in an area known as Al-Manakh. The Mosque of Quba, the first mosque built, is here and the Mosque of the Two Quiblahs, the monument to Muhammad's decision to change the direction of facing for prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca.

of them was that *Allah* is one, all merciful, all powerful, controls all events and would judge all people, according to what they had done in their lives, on the Last Day. God also expected people to be generous with their wealth. Muhammad preached on street corners, met and worshiped with a number of followers in Mecca. Some of the merchants of the town

were not happy when he criticised their way of life and spoke of the one God to whom they should commit themselves. The merchants still stuck to the old gods. As opposition grew, the messages which Muhammad received spoke of how the Prophets of the Old Testament were also not believed and that those who would not listen to them met with disaster.



For notes (1) and (2) see the box opposite

(3) see the box on page 6



THE 'HIJRA' TO MEDINA (622)

Muhammad received some protection from Abu Talib but this ended when he died in about 619 A.D. As opposition grew to Muhammad and his followers, even from his own relatives, they decided to leave Mecca and go to Yathrib (later renamed Medina, 'city of the Prophet') which was then a fertile oasis. After sending a few of his people to stay with a group there, Muhammad and the remaining believers and their families went to Medina in 622. This came to be known as the *hijra* (emigration) and is taken to be the start of the Islamic era, the event from which the Muslim calendar is calculated. (4) In Medina Muhammad was

THE KORAN (*Qur'an*)

Muslims believe that the Koran is the final, unchanging word of God which was revealed to Mohammad in Arabic, between the age of 40 and 62. The Prophet memorised these revelations and taught them word for word. They were collected and written down after his death. Tradition holds that Zaid ibn Thalbit, Muhammad's secretary, began to collate them when ordered by Caliph Abu Bakr (632-34) and the task was continued by Caliph Umar (634-44). This led to different versions and Caliph Uthman (644-56) ruled which were authentic. Copies were kept in Mecca, Medina, Kufa, Basra and Baghdad.

Koran (Qur'an) is often translated as 'to read aloud or to recite' and it is learnt by heart in Koranic schools. One who can recite the whole of the Koran is called a *Hafiz* and there are popular 'master reciters' called *Qari*. The Koran is divided into 114 *Surah*, or chapters, and the title of each *surah* is taken from a prominent word found in it. The Koran are treated with great reverence and it is studied and used in worship only in Arabic.

The Koran gives basic teachings about God and urges people to be totally committed to him. The themes covered: the oneness of God; the need for human kind to give thanks and obey him; God's part in history, from creation to the end of the world; and judgement and after-life. There is guidance for daily life and versions of Bible stories and it is seen as the clarification of Jewish and Christian scriptures. Muslims hold the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), the Psalms and the Gospels to be important and God's revealed word.

Muhammad interpreted the word of God by the way he lived (*summa*). Stories and sayings from his life are known as the *Hadith*. They are used for guidance in matters where there is no specific help in the Koran and together are part of the basis of Islamic Law (*Fiqh*).

accepted as both a religious and a military leader by the local population. The latter was divided into two groups and the new-comers formed a community of their own. His arrival was probably helped by the fact that the people had already heard from local Jewish clans that a messiah was expected and that they hoped he would help them overcome their divisions.

Islam began to take shape around the example and revelations given by Muhammad and from this time onwards it developed as both a religion and a political power. Many of the Jewish population aligned themselves with Muhammad, but they would not accept him as a prophet - some even opposed and mocked

the Muslim beliefs. This resulted in Muhammad expelling two Jewish clans and executing members of a third. He gradually took on a stronger political role as his community became involved in hostilities with local pagan groups. When possible Muhammad solved problems with diplomacy but at times he resorted to battle, such as the battle of Badr, in 624, when he beat the Meccans. This happened again in 627 when Medina's Jewish community was virtually wiped out because of the support they gave to Abu Sufyan, from Mecca, when he tried to take over the town.

Muhammad and his followers carried out many raids against Mecca and their caravans and by January, 630, he was strong enough to take the town. He found

little resistance and treated his enemies well, most of whom became Muslims and joined him. Many of the the gods in the Ka'ba were destroyed and Muhammad dedicated it to the One God, *Allah*. He reorganised the town's administration and put down any remaining opposition. Muhammad went back to Medina and carried out further work to unify the peoples of Arabia bringing them into his federation as converts to Islam. Thus a state was gradually formed with Muhammad as its unquestioned head and the foundation for the *Umma* (community) of Islam was created.

THE CALIPHATE (632-661) (5)

When Muhammad died, the 8th. June, 632, he left a religion which was shared by a federation of tribes. His 'successor' was Abu Bakhr (632-34) who was the Prophet's father-in-law and the first *Caliph* - 'successor' or 'deputy' of Muhammad. Abu Bakhr completed the conquest of Arabia and entered Palestine. At this time there was never any lengthy peace between the nomadic Arab peoples as they were always raiding each other. Muhammad and the first four Caliphs used this to their advantage and organised *razzias* (raids) from Medina into Syria and Iraq. In this way they filled the power vacuum between the declining Roman, (Christian) Byzantine and (Zoroastrian) Persian Empires and brought back booty. They gradually established forward base camps instead of returning to Medina after each raid. The Byzantine and Persian Governors fled and treaties were made with the local people.

They gave the status of 'protected minorities' to 'people of the book', those who believed in one God and had written scriptures such as Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians. These were treated well and this set a pattern which was to be repeated wherever Islam went. They were not forced to become Muslims but their conversion was a gradual process over the years. This rapid expansion led to the previously dominant religions - Christianity, in North Africa and the Byzantine Empire, and Zoroastrianism, in the Persian Empire - being almost completely wiped out. Elements of these religions were incorporated into Islam as it progressed. Between 634 and 656 - under Caliphs Umar I (634-44) and Uthman (644-56) - the Muslim armies used this method to conquer the whole of the Arabian peninsula, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria, and parts of Armenia and Persia. Umar I and his troops took Damascus (635) and Jerusalem (638)



(4) The Muslim Calendar is entirely lunar and is not adjusted to keep in step with the solar year, which is 10 or 11 days longer. Muslim dates differ from the Western solar calendar and the years are counted from the Hijra and are known as 1 A.H. (After Hijrah) - so the year 2000 A.D. is 1420/21 A.H.

(4) The Muslim Calendar - continued: The Months are: Muharram, Safar, Rabi' I, Rabi' II, Jumada I, Jumada II, Rajad, Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhu-l-Qa'da, Dhu-l-Hijja.



Above: a Koranic school at Mopti, Mali

and beat the Romans, under Heraclius, at Yarmuk (636). After the assassination of Uthman disagreements broke out over the right to the Caliphate. This was at the time of the fourth Caliph, Ali (656-61) Muhammad's son-in-law. He moved the capital to Hufa and the outcome was a division in the Muslim community and it split into the 'Shiites' and the 'Sunnites'. Ali in turn was murdered and when Muawiya I, the former Governor of Syria, came to power though the Shiites would not recognise him.

THE Umayyad Dynasty (661-750)

The Umayyad dynasty, founded by Caliph Muawiya I (661-80), made Damascus their capital and expanded further. The only major power, save 'Christendom', to stand against them was the Byzantine Empire - with their capital at Constantinople. Muslim troops conquered Tunisia (670), Morocco (690), and reached the Atlantic coast of North Africa by 710. They crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in 711, overran Spain (720) and continued into France, as far as Narbonne, only to be defeated by King Charles Martel at Tours and Poitiers in 732. In the east they ranged into Persia and Afghanistan, as far as the Indus (Pakistan). These military expeditions, though having the main aim of enrichment, were called *Jihad* or 'holy wars'. The Muslim armies were mainly Arab until 700, then converts to Islam (Persian, Berber and Turkish) joined the ranks as other lands were conquered.

The Umayyads brought about legal and administrative reform in their Empire. Art and architecture developed greatly, one example of which is the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. By 750 the Empire extended from Spain in the west to India and China in the east. With stretching of resources, a lack of manpower led to the Umayyads being weakened and they were still unable to control the Shiites.

THE Abbasid Dynasty (750-[936]1258)

The Abbasid Dynasty was founded by al-Mansur (the Victor) and they ruled for the next 500 years. They toppled the Umayyad with the help of the Shiites and moved the capital to Baghdad (762), claiming to be descendants of Mohammad's uncle al-Abbas. The Abbasids reacted against the Umayyads and tried to make the Caliphate follow a more orthodox Islam. Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809) set up 'tribunals' to enforce orthodoxy and began the *jihad*. It was during this time that Islam developed greatly and that the *Shari'a* law began to be formulated and it took the central role in higher Islamic education. Despite this change in emphasis religious leaders were given positions in administration, such as advisers, judges and lawyers. (6)

The Abbasids killed Marwan, the last Umayyad Caliph, in Egypt, and chased his supporters across North Africa. Some of them escaped to the Iberian peninsula and later founded the 'Moorish State' in Spain (Cordoba Caliphate, 756-1031), which the Abbasids never managed to control. They developed the Arab-Islamic culture and merged it with that of the Persian Empire, replacing the Arab bureaucracy with an Iraqi and Persian civil service and local provincial governors. This restructuring gave rise to the multi-cultural Islam which developed when members of the 'community' were chosen on religious, not racial grounds. This 'melting pot' of race, culture, art and learning set the foundation for Islam to be built upon and helped the Empire survive for so long. Much of the Greek sciences, literature, arts, government were taught and the books of the time were translated into Arabic. The Universities which were established rivalled those of Europe. The Abbasid Dynasty also travelled and conquered over great distances. For example Harun al-Rashid sent embassies to Charlemagne (797 and

801) and made an alliance with the T'ang emperor in 798. The cross-fertilisation of cultures had begun - with Muslim merchants in Canton (Kantou) and Chinese in Baghdad. The majority of the Abbasid Caliphs were toppled in military coups. They gradually began to lose control of their distant provinces, where local governors with strong armies chose their successors. In this way their central authority was weakened and in 945 they even lost their power in Baghdad which was ruled by the Shiite Buyid Dynasty (945-1055). The latter were replaced by the Seljuks, Turkish Muslims, who ruled for 150 years. The Abbasid Caliphs remained as Caliphs in Baghdad until the Mongol invasion of 1258.

The Independent Kingdoms (909-1258) began in the last 300 years of the Abbasid Empire. Several were Shiite, including the Imamite sect ('Twelvers'). Other Dynasties which also emerged were the Carmathians, Ghaznavids, Almoravids and the Almohads (see issue no. 334, June-July, 1997). The Fatimid Dynasty (909-1171) are a good example of these kingdoms. They took their name, and right of descent from Muhammad's daughter, Fatimah. They were a Shiite group who had links with the Ismaili, 'Seveners', founded in 765, in support of Ismail who claimed to be the seventh Imam. Their leader was Ubadayyah al-Mahdi and he founded a rival Caliphate to the Abbasids in Tunisia (took over from the Aghlabid Dynasty 800-909) and Egypt, where they established the city of Cairo and the al-Azhar University (970) which has always been one of the foremost universities in the Islamic world. The Fatimids claimed to be 'the sole rightful heirs to the Caliphate' but internal strife stopped them establishing a Caliphate.

In 1094 the struggle for control came to a head when two brothers, al-Mustali and al-Nizar, and their followers fought. Al-Mustali won and remained Caliph until Saladin founded the Ayyubid dynasty (1171-1250) in Egypt.

THE CRUSADES

In the West the first well known 'clash' between Christianity and Islam is the Crusades (1096-1254). We forget that Muslims and Christians had been in contact with each other for over three hundred and fifty years before the First Crusade. They had lived together in Arabia and North Africa and only began to fight on a



large scale when Muslim armies invaded Europe in 711.

In the early 11th. century the Seljuks (nomadic Turks) seized Baghdad (1055) from the Abbasids who were controlled by the Buyid Dynasty (945-1055). They ruled in the name of the Abbasids and established a dynasty which lasted from 1038-1194. The Seljuks did not claim absolute authority and were led by their political head, the Sultan (not Caliph), who had the authority to protect the Muslim 'community' and the faith by *jihad*. Gradually the Seljuks spread into Iraq, Persia and parts of Anatolia (modern Turkey). They made alliances with merchants and landowners and as a result they became prosperous and formed a new type of Muslim state. The bureaucracy which held them together was based on people of Persian and Arab origin, all with Arabic as a common language. They imposed a common law and developed trade along the sea routes of the Mediterranean, Black Sea, Indian Ocean and the over land routes to Asia and Indonesia. This successful expansion set the stage for an eventual 'clash' with the various European powers.

The Crusades were the result of a variety of social, economic and religious elements which came together in the second half of the 11th. century. These included the regeneration of the Church, the defeat of the Byzantines (1071) by the Seljuk (when the Byzantine Emperor asked the Pope for help) and their occupation of Jerusalem. The new Christian fervour rekindled the concept of pilgrimage and the holy war against 'the heathen' and the wish to come to the aid of the Christians in the Orient. After the Synod of Clarmont, 26th. November, 1095, Pope Urban II convinced leaders that the Crusade was a worthy cause. The first attempt (1096) was an unorganised adventure led by Peter of Amiens, a hermit who inspired people through his sermons to fight to liberate the Holy Land. Then the First

Crusade (1096-99) got under way with an army mainly from Flanders and France. The Crusaders had a series of victories culminating in the capture of Jerusalem on the 15th. July, 1099. The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the smaller Crusader States were then established. The seeds were sown for the Second Crusade (1147-49) when Edessa was taken by Imadeddin Zenkis, the Emir of Mosul, in 1144. This expedition was fated due to the disunity between the French and German forces and led to defeats at Dorylaeum and Laodicea, and ineffective campaigns against Damascus and Ascalon.

In 1187 Sultan Saladin retook Jerusalem and the Third Crusade (1189-92) began two years later. Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa led virtually the whole of the 'western world' on this Crusade. They had a victory at Iconium, but the Emperor was drowned in the River Saleph on 10th. June, 1190. His son, Duke Frederick of Swabia, led an army against Acre but also died in 1191. Richard I, the Lion-Heart, and Philip II of France took Acre the same year. Richard and Saladin made peace and came to the agreement that the coastal strip from Tyre and Jaffa was given to the Christians, and that they could make pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

In 1197 Emperor Henry VI set out to win the Holy Land and conquer the Byzantine Empire, but due to his sudden death only an area near Antioch was taken. Pope Innocent III called for the Fourth Crusade (1202-04) and many of the French Nobility answered. Constantinople eventually fell to the Crusaders in 1204. The Fifth Crusade (1228-29) was led by Emperor Frederick II. He made a treaty with Sultan Elkamil of Egypt taking Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. In 1244 Jerusalem was retaken by Muslims.

In the Sixth Crusade (1248-54) St. King Louis IX of France wanted to destroy the power of Egypt. His army took Damietta

(1249), but they were defeated and taken prisoner at Mansura. Louis was only released after a ransom was paid in 1254. The Seventh, and final, Crusade (1270) was also fated when Louis IX went to Tunis where he and many of his army caught the plague. 1291 saw the Mamelukes (Mammaluks) (1250-1517) take Acre, while Tyre, Beirut and Sidon were abandoned by the Christian armies. The Lusignan Dynasty continued to rule Cyprus until 1489 and the Knights of St. John in Rhodes until 1523.

The Crusades cannot be viewed in isolation as the fight against the encroaches of Islam into Europe was going on elsewhere at the same time. The idealism of the Western powers was overtaken by national concerns as commercial and political interests came to the fore. Many say that what resulted was an opening up of the West to the East - both in culture and trade. Trade with the East flourished and many Mediterranean ports and states became rich. The West also became more aware of its own culture because of the contact with that of the Byzantine Empire and Arabs.

The Seljuks Dynasty began to weaken in the second part of the 12th. century with the Mongol advance. European states also began the 'Reconquista', to reoccupy lost territory, and they pushed the Almohads back to North Africa. Only the Kingdom of Granada remained of Muslim Spain and that ended in 1492. The unification of the Kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, with the marriage of Ferdinand II and Isabella, gave a united Spain, which was able

to bring about the demise of Muslim Spain, though individuals did remain behind until their final expulsion, by edict, in 1614.

THE MONGOL EMPIRE (1206-1405)

The eastern Islamic empire came under attack from the Mongols, nomads from Siberia and central Asia, in the 12th. and 13th. century. Their most famous leader was Genghis Khan (Temujin)(1162-1227) who gave rise to the Il-Khanid Dynasty (1256-1353) which ruled areas of Persia, Iraq and Anatolia (modern Turkey). Genghis Khan managed to unite the various Mongol tribes by 1206. He then led them to invade the Chin Empire of northern China in 1211, breaking through the Great Wall and eventually taking Peking in 1215. After his death his grandson, Batu, led the invasion of Europe. Northern Russia was gradually occupied between 1237-38 and Kiev was destroyed in 1240. The next year a joint



Polish-German army was routed at Liegnitz and the Hungarians at Mohi. The Mongol Empire grew out of their strategy and mobility. They began to slow down and eventually to decline due to the deaths of their leaders, especially the 'Great Khans'.

The original Mongol religion was a type of Shamanism but as they moved along they came into contact with three other major religions - Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. It was only after they took Baghdad (1258), and overthrew the Abbasids, that Islam became dominant amongst them. Mahmud Ghazan (1295-1304) was the first Il-Khan to convert to Islam though not all the Khans were favourable to the new faith - such as those ruled by descendants of Chaghatay (1227-41), one of Genghis's four sons. The conquests of the Mongols led to Turkic people moving all over western Asia. The Mongols were not numerous so they recruited soldiers from other peoples especially from Turkey, and Turkish became the dominant language. Their Empire was from Germany to Korea, from the Arctic Ocean to Turkey and the Persian Gulf, at one time they even attempted a seaborne invasions of Japan and Java. As a result of their incursions the Seljuk's hold was destroyed and the foundations laid for the later Ottoman Empire.

With pressure from the Crusades the Muslim Empire in the Middle East began to weaken. Under Hulagu Khan, another grandson of Genghis, they sacked Baghdad in 1258 ending the Abbasid rule in Iraq. In 1260 the Mongols were eventually stopped by the Mamelukes at the battle of Ain Jalut, near Jerusalem. The Mameluke Sultans ruled Egypt and had invited the Abbasids to Cairo. In Persia the Il-Khanid Kingdom was established by the time of Timur Lenk (Tamerlane 1336-1405) a Muslim Turkoman Prince from Samarkand in Transoxiana. He was closer to the Turks and made Samarkand his capital.

From there he conquered the area from southern Russia, northeast to Mongolia and south to India, Persia and Mesopotamia.

THE SAFAVID DYNASTY (1501-1732)

The Safavids developed from a Sufi brotherhood in Azerbaijan, central Asia, which had been founded by Shaykh Ishaq Safi al-Din in the mid 13th. century. They had been Sunni Muslims but became Shiite in the 15th. century (7) Their first ruler was Ismail (1501-24) and he conquered Azerbaijan in 1501 and Iran by 1510. The Shiism, the 'Twelvers', practised was imposed as a state religion which meant that Shiism changed from being a sectarian movement to a national religion, uniting Persia and leaving its mark until today. The Ottomans attacked this as being 'heretical' and fought the Dynasty. These assaults led their capital to be moved from Tabriz to Qazvin and then to Isfahan.

The Persians took control of the eastern Causus and the Persian Gulf. The Safavid's decline began around the time of Shah Abbas II in 1666 with clerical opposition to the monarchy, anti-Shiite forces from Zandahar region of Afghanistan. By the beginning of the 18th. century it was too late and the empire was breaking up and the governor of Afghanistan, Mir Way, declared independence. Mir's son, Mahmud, then invaded much of Persia in 1722, devastating cities, the economy and reviving tribalism.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1453-1924)

The Ottoman Turks were descendants of Turkoman nomads who arrived in Anatolia in the 11th. century as part of the Seljuk army. Their name comes from Osman I (the Turkish pronunciation of Uthman, the Arab Muslim name) the son of their founder (Ertoghrul, a 13th. century Turkish chieftain) who succeeded his father in about 1285. Osman gained

independence for his people and began to expand by mainly fighting the Tatars and the Byzantines. The Ottomans saw themselves as *ghazis* (fighters for Islam) and carried out guerrilla attacks principally against the Byzantines at first. It was during the reign of Orhan a vital part of the Ottoman army was created in the corps of *Janissaries* - derived from the Turkish 'yeni cheri' meaning 'new troops'. They were made up of slave conscripts from occupied peoples - such

as young Christian men from the Balkans. Those who joined the corps were chosen for their qualities and given special education and training, during which they converted to Islam. Gradually over the years these recruits worked in administration, as well as the army, and had a great influence on who would become Sultan and rule the Empire.

The expansion continued to the west and the Empire began to encroach into the Aegean and the Balkans. At the same time they were fighting off Tamerlane and the Mongol armies from the East. There were several attempts to take Constantinople but these were unsuccessful until 1453 when Sultan Mehmed II (1451-81) conquered the city and renamed it Istanbul. This brought the Byzantine Empire to an end and Constantinople became their capital. The expansion continued - to the west Herzegovina and Bosnia (Balkans); the east the Crimea; through Syria, Egypt and North Africa.

Up to this time the Ottoman Empire had no central government and administration,

which was amazing considering the diversity of peoples, cultures and religions which were involved. Now the centralised administration evolved which was controlled by the Sultanate. The Empire was generally tolerant with less than half the population being Muslim, and under direct rule. A key element in the new administration was the 'millet system'. A 'millet' was an autonomous part of the Empire based on a community's religion which was also allowed to keep its own leader and customs. The leader was responsible to the Sultan, or his representatives, for things such as the collection of *jizya*, a type of poll tax levied on non-Muslims for the upkeep on the army. Muslims had to do military service, whereas others did not but supported it financially. Along side the 'millet system' there grew a system of 'guilds' of artisans and popular mystic orders. The 'guilds' often cut across religious boundaries and included many peoples with the same skills.

Expansion slackened during the reign of Bayazid II (1481-1512) with the rise of the

Safavid dynasty in Persia - who threatened them. The Ottomans defeated the Mamelukes in Iraq, Syria and Egypt. In the 15th. and 16th. century the Ottomans restored the Caliphate and conquered south-eastern Europe. They had military, diplomatic and commercial dealings with many European states. Sultan Selim I (1512-20) conquered Egypt, Syria and the Arabian Peninsula, and defeated the Safavids of Iran at the Battle of Caldiran (1514). Next came the well known Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-66) who enlarged the Empire even more to cover most of the Near East, northern Africa, western Asia, the Balkans and Hungary. He built up the state structure, gave prominence to Shari'a law and brought in the Koran as the basis of education. The arts and architecture flourished especially in Constantinople. The Muslim world was united and Suleiman developed the Ottoman

army and navy in the Mediterranean so that the Empire became one of Europe's greatest powers. With the death of Suleiman in 1566 the Empire began to slowly decline due to nepotism, corruption and internal feuding. Amidst it all the Sultan and the ruling class (Turko-Islamic aristocracy) tried to hold on to power at all costs but eventually they fled.

The 17th. century saw attempts to restore the Ottoman Empire by such people as Sultan Murad IV (1623-40) and the Koprulu family of Grand Viziers (chief executive officers), who dominated the administration from 1656 to 1702. The Empire's navy met with its first major defeat in the Battle of Lepanto (1571) but despite that it still dominated the eastern Mediterranean. The invasion of central Europe ended in failure and the Ottoman army began to collapse. There were a series of other losses which continued into the 18th. century with the Russo-Turkish Wars.

Again there were attempts to reform the Ottoman system and to model the army on those of the West. Eventually getting rid of the Janissaries ended in disaster with them being wiped out, along with their ally the Bektashiyya Sufi brotherhood, by Sultan Mahmud II in 1826. The Sultans had begun to see the Janissaries in the same light as the Sufis - subversive mystics. Further defeats by European powers and the rise of Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman Governor of Egypt, did not help the situation. Mahmud tried another series of Western reforms in all areas of Ottoman life. These were continued throughout the Tanzimat reform era (1839-76) and the reign of

Abd al-Hamid II (1876-1909). Despite such efforts the internal problems of the Empire took their toll as did the external incursion by the major European powers. The French took Algeria (1847) and Tunisia (1881), the British Egypt (1882), the Italians Libya and an Anglo-Egyptian rule began in the Sudan (1892). The territories of the 'Sick Man of Europe' were ready to be divided up, but the balance of power had to be kept.

Abd al-Hamid held the inevitable at bay with skilled politics - in dealing with the European powers, and in developing the pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic movements. He brought in a parliament and constitution (1876) but soon reverted to an autocratic rule. This nurtured opposition and the 'Young Turks' began to take the lead and forced Abd al-Hamid to restore the parliament and constitution (1908). The change did not last long and the 'Young Turks' dethroned Abd al-Hamid the following year and Mehmed V Rashid (1909-18) took over.

The 'Young Turk' era (1908-18) saw much modernisation in every aspect of life and the secularisation of the state. Their leader, Enver Pasha (1881-1922), drew the Empire into World War I, on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Their defeat led to the final collapse and division of the Ottoman Empire. Most of these changes were accepted but Turkish nationalists disputed the control of Anatolia, which resulted in the Turkish war of independence (1918-23). The dispute was finally settled in the Treaty of Sevres (1920) and Turkey became a republic under Mustapha Kemal (Kemal Atatürk, president of Turkey 1923-1938), and was recognised in the Treaty of Lausanne. The Caliphate was finally abolished in 1924. Claims of sovereignty over the Muslim world were given up and the new Turkish state was created - a constitutional republic based on secular law, not Islamic law.

SUFISM (7TH. C. - PRESENT DAY)

'Sufi' comes from the word *suf*, which is the simple woollen robe the Sufis wore. It is a mystical tradition with an aim of gaining union with God. This is achieved by various practises such as abstinence, poverty and meditation. There have been many different Sufi *tariqas* (orders or brotherhoods) over the centuries and some still survive today.

Their origins are disputed but it is believed that they began in the 7th. and 8th. century. Some say that this type of mysticism was practised by the Prophet, others that it began as a way of restoring Islamic purity during the Umayyad dynasty. It was influenced by the ascetic practices of Syrian Christian monks, Zoroastrians in Persia, and Hindu Vedanta. Hasan al-Basri (642-728) is known as the 'father of Muslim mysticism' and his followers founded a monastic community at Abbadan, near Basra in Iraq. Other schools developed at Baghdad and Kufa - al-Muhasibi (781-857), who was at the former, was very influential.

The Sufi 'golden age' was between the 11th. to 13th. century when the brotherhoods developed. They lived a monastic life-style, in community in order to discover the nature of true self and its purpose. They developed music, drumming and dance as part of their worship. Probably the best known brotherhood is the Mevlevi ('Whirling Dervishes') of Turkey.

This article will be continued in a future issue when we will look at some of the trends in Islam during the last two hundred years. We will also have other items concerning Islam. For more information on Islam and work which White Fathers do with Muslims please see issue no. 311 of August-September, 1993.



(7) see the box above

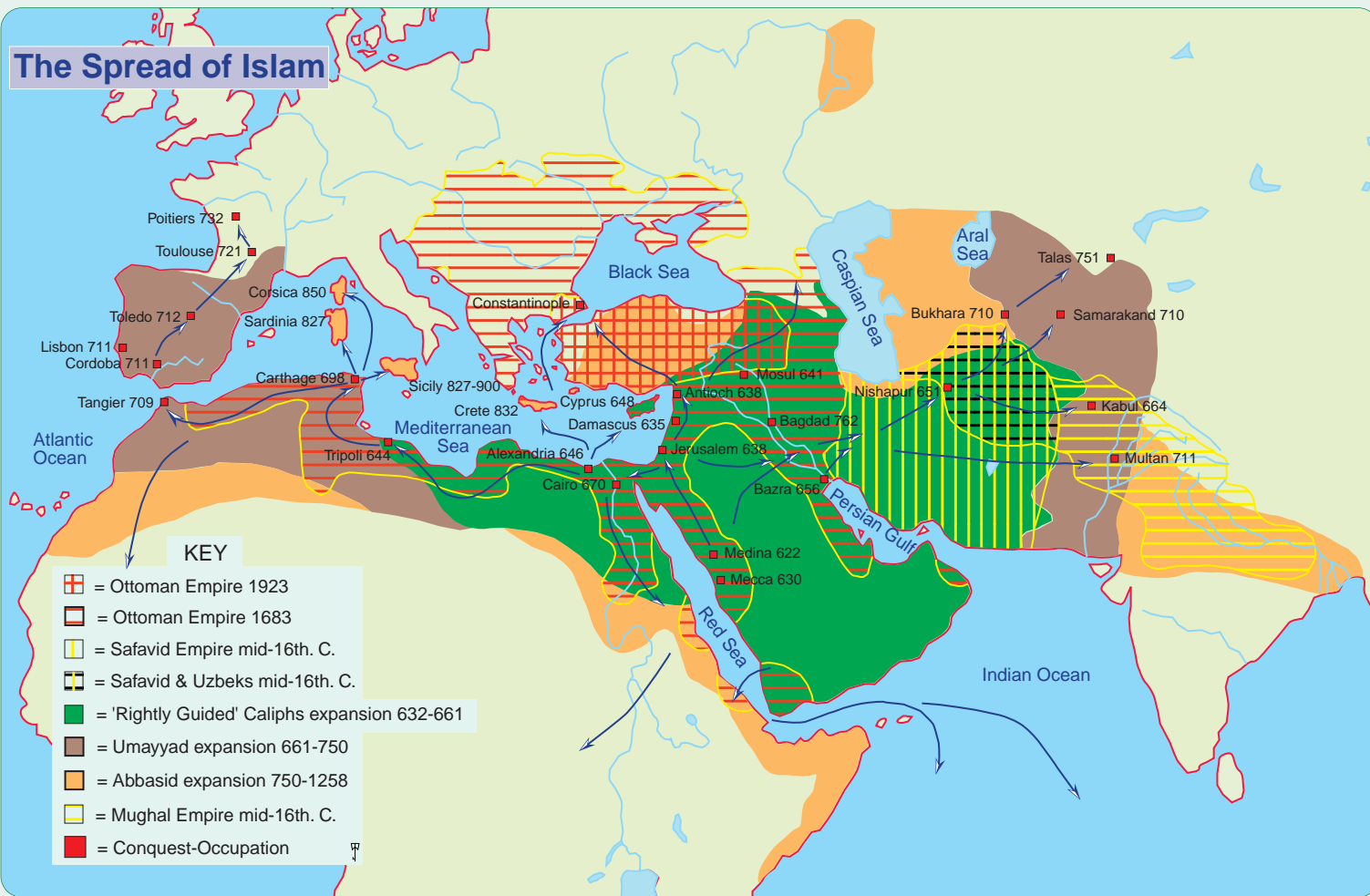
The beautiful minaret of a mosque in Dakar, Senegal



SOME MAJOR ISLAMIC DYNASTIES

Date	Name	Centre/Territory
632-61	'Rightly Directed' Caliphs	Medina
661-750	Umayyads	Damascus
750-1258	Abbasids	Baghdad, Iraq
756-1031	Umayyads	Spain
789-926	Idrisids	Morocco
800-909	Aghlabids	Tunisia
819-1005	Samanids	Khurasan, Turkestan
860-1281	Zaidi Imamas	Yemen
867-1495	Saffarids	Eastern Persia
869-905	Tulunids	Egypt, Syria
894-1100	Carmathians	Arabia
909-1171	Fatimids	N. Africa, Egypt, Syria
932-1062	Buyids	Persia, Iraq
945-1004	Hamdanids	Syria, Jazira
972-1148	Zirids	Tunisia, E. Algeria
977-1186	Ghaznavids	Khurasan, N. India
992-1211	Karakhanids	Afghanistan, Turkestan
1015-1152	Hammadids	E. Algeria
1038-1194	Seljuks	Iraq, Persia
1056-1147	Almoravids	Morocco, Spain
1077-1307	Seljuks of Rum	Turkey
1090-1256	Ismailis of Alamut	N. Persia
1130-1269	Almohads	N. Africa, Spain
1169-1260	Ayyubids	Egypt, Syria
1196-1465	Marinids	Morocco
1226-1502	Golden Horde	S. Russia
1127-1222	Zangids	Jazira, Syria
1228-1574	Hafsids	Tunisia
1229-1454	Rasulids	Yemen
1230-1492	Nasrids	Granada, Spain
1250-1517	Mamelukes	Egypt, Syria, Hejaz
1256-1353	Ilkhanids	Persia
1261-1517	Abbasids	Cairo
1281-1924	Ottomans	Constantinople
1370-1506	Timurids	Turkestan, Persia
1378-1508	Akkoyunlu	Turkey, Azerbaijan
1380-1468	Karakoyunlu	Azerbaijan
1500-1598	Shaybanids	Turkestan
1501-1732	Safavids of Isfahan	Persia
1511-1659	Saadids	Morocco
1526-1858	Moguls	Delhi
1779-1925	Qajars	Tehran, Iran

The Spread of Islam



THE SHARI'A LAW

Shari'a may be translated as 'the way to a watering-place'. Some say that the basis of Shari'a is found in pre-Islamic Arabian customary law and from the early administrative practices of Islam. The interpretation of the Shari'a, known as *fiqh* (knowledge), varies. Some see it as being unchangeable while others believe that it is a developing code. The Shari'a is derived from four

sources: the Koran; the *sunna* ('customs') of Muhammad, as seen in the *hadith* ('tradition'); *qiyas* ('analogy') using earlier judgements and applying them to new matters; and *ijma*, the 'consensus' of the 'community' of believers. The end result is a personal rule for all aspects of life, as well as a system of law which passes on the rights and duties given by God.

There are several *madhhab* (schools) of Islamic law. The Sunni people recognise four schools which are named after their founders:

The School	The Founder	Places Practised Today
the Hanafi (Hanafites)	Abu Hanifa (699-767)	Balkans, Afghanistan, Central Asian Reps., Middle East, China, Pakistan, India
the Maliki (Malikites)	Malik ibn Anas al-Abahi (713-795)	Andalusia, Gulf, Algeria, U. Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, W. & C. Africa
the Shafii (Shafiites)	Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi (767-820)	Palestine, Jordan, Yemen, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Egypt and E. Africa
the Hanbali (Hanbalites)	Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) reformed by Abdul Wahhab (18th.C.)	Official law of Saudi Arabia and of great influence with 'Fundamentalist'

Most Shiites follow Imami law which was formed by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Qummi (d.903). Imami practice, unlike the orthodox schools, does not use *qiyas* to deal with a problem that cannot be resolved by referring to

the Koran or Hadith. Instead they believe that their divinely inspired Imam (religious leader) alone has the right to elucidate an area of law. The Shiite law also differs in regard to inheritance law.

Archbishop Christopher Munzehirwa

Compiled by Sr. Mary Lampard W.S.

Remembering Archbishop Christopher Munzehirwa S.J. - Servant and Witness

Christopher Munzehirwa, Archbishop of Bukavu, the Democratic Republic of Congo, was murdered on the 29th. October, 1996. Two days later he was buried in a hastily contrived coffin of planks taken from school desks. Ten priests and a handful of religious and layfolk surrounded the grave, dug just outside his Cathedral, in a place where so many refugees had slept in the open.

A year later, on the 29th. October, 1997, over 100 priests and thousands of Christians gathered to celebrate the first anniversary of what can be called his martyrdom. It was decided not to exhume the Archbishop's body to place it within the Cathedral. In the first place, exhumation is not an African custom; besides, the outdoor grave is more accessible to all and bears the hall-mark of simplicity, so dear to 'Mzee' (the Elder).

The Eucharist - which lasted five and a half hours! - was celebrated inside the Cathedral on account of the daily down-pours of the rainy season, but another estimated 15,000 people were standing outside. A choir of 100 young people sang magnificently in Swahili, Mashii (the local language) as well as in French and Latin. Some of the songs had been composed for the occasion. Here are a few snippets, in a rough translation:

"I'll see Christopher, our old Christopher
in heaven,
I'll see Christopher, our old Christopher
with God,
Praising his Creator in his great voice
of thunder.
At the right hand of Jesus, there is Christopher,
smiling as he always was.
I'd be happy to see that, for he deserved it,
this old martyr of ours!
Flowers for the Elder, roses for Christopher!
This great man has marked our history.
We remember your messages,
which inspire us still.
Good Shepherd, you have shown us
the path of peace."

Then, echoing the late Archbishop Romero, who wrote,
"They can kill me; they cannot
kill the Truth",
the song rang out,
"They have killed Christopher,
They cannot kill Truth!"

At the Offertory huge clothes-baskets were carried around the Cathedral and to the people outside. Everyone gladly put something into them, often the widow's mite. In a long offertory procession these baskets were carried to the altar while the faithful sang and danced. Sister Patricia, a Belgian White Sister, wrote "I danced tirelessly with my brothers and sisters, imagining the Elder watching us, with his mischievous little smile. He who loved simplicity

and always tried to pass unnoticed, must have found we were exaggerating a bit!"

At the end of Mass the blessing of the grave took place. The sun had been shining at its brightest. It was only when the great crowd of 115 priests had encircled the grave that a torrential down-pour of rain fell on the crowd - a blessing, in African eyes, (but I wonder how the priests felt, drenched to the skin in their fine white albs!)

WHO WAS HE, THE ELDER, SERVANT AND WITNESS?

Christopher Munzehirwa was born in 1926 in Lukumbo, formerly Zaire. After his school years, he studied for the priesthood and was ordained for the diocese of Bukavu in 1958. Five years later he requested to enter the Society of Jesus and followed the long training required until his final vows in 1975. He was entrusted

with very responsible positions within his Order, finally being appointed Jesuit Provincial of Central Africa. At the end of his term of office, he was ordained Bishop-Coadjutor of the diocese of Kasongo, and later Archbishop of Bukavu, while retaining responsibility for his first diocese of Kasongo.

In 1994 Archbishop Munzehirwa took part in the African Synod in Rome. When he returned, it was to witness the thousands of refugees fleeing the horrors of the Rwandan genocide. For the next two years, he was tireless in trying to stem the conflict, to succour the afflicted, to comfort them, to turn the eyes of the world to the bitter sufferings of the peoples of the Great Lakes, particularly the refugees. He wrote pastoral letters and pamphlets, mapping out a path for peace. He preached reconciliation, justice and nonviolence



and finally, like another Oscar Romero, he died at the hands of the military.

WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS CHRISTOPHER?

Christopher was a thick-set man, sturdy as an oak, down to earth, as he tramped in his famous miner's boots. Something of a Bohemian, he vastly preferred his yellow shirt with its tartan collar to his episcopal regalia. Father of the poor, he gladly let small children rummage his pockets for some goodies he had smuggled there for them from some religious house which had offered him hospitality.

Once when he was Provincial of the Jesuits, he was for some reason not expected at the novitiate where he was going and so there was no one to meet him at the border between Rwanda and Zaire. So he set out on foot. On the way it began to rain and he arrived soaked at the novitiate. He let himself in and went to the dining room, as all the Fathers were at their siesta. He was not recognised by the

domestic, who ordered him out. At the end of the siesta, the Novice Master found him serenely seated outside the dining-room door!

Christopher was a scholar. Whenever he went to a Jesuit house, in Africa or Europe, the library would be one of his favourite haunts. His preferred subjects were the social sciences, modern Western history, research into his own Mashi culture and the Fathers of the Church. He always had his apostolate in view. For instance, once in Belgium he was searching among the works of St. Augustine, looking for a reference on 'widows'; it was to help an association of widows in Bukavu.

In public affairs Archbishop Munzihirwa played his prophetic role with complete freedom and fearlessness. He did all in his power to arouse world opinion in favour of the refugees who lived in inhuman conditions. The Common Good and the Salvation of the People were his supreme values in public affairs. Like so many prophets, he was not

heeded by the great and powerful; but he gave hope and consolation to the poor and suffering, whose way of life he shared - even to being forcibly conscripted into the army along with students whose chaplain he was.

Two of his secretaries, both Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters), have written touching accounts of his indefatigable zeal as a Pastor who was the Servant of his people. One tells how he used to write articles on all sorts of subjects which revealed something of his deep spirituality, characterised by joy and thanksgiving, love of prayer and trust in Mary. Once he left a note on his desk, "I feel that the time has come to accomplish that other Will of God for me: to suffer for the diocese.

May the Lord help me 'to fill up in my body what is lacking to the sufferings of Christ'." These were prophetic words.

THE LAST DAYS OF MZEE CHRISTOPHER

From the end of September 1996 Archbishop Munzihirwa remained the only authority, the only Voice, in the district of Eastern Congo. The other leaders had fled or resigned, leaving the populace to the mercy of the undisciplined soldiery. So Mzee formed a Committee of Defence of about 20 people to safeguard the people as much as possible.

On the last Sunday of his life he offered the Eucharistic Sacrifice with unusual gravity. He even stopped the choir from singing, to allow for silent meditation. After each Scripture reading he said a few words relevant to the situation: warning the people against

"hunting down Tutsis", warning the young against military involvement, encouraging traditional values of loyalty and hospitality and above all urging peace among all ethnic groups.

The priest who accompanied the Archbishop and who acted as his chauffeur was told to drive at full speed, stopping for no one, in spite of sporadic gunfire, to the Xaverian Fathers at a place called Muhumba. Here he got news from Rome and, in order to counter misinformation by the world media, he then and there drew up a short account of the situation for Vatican Radio. Then Mzee told his companion to drive to the military H.Q. Although almost paralysed with fear, the priest took heart from the example of his fearless 70 year old Archbishop and did as he was told. In the absence



of the Commanding Officer, Mzee left a note protesting against the extortions made by the military against the civil population and denouncing the practice of forced conscription of the young, who were then drugged and made to believe they were invulnerable.

At about 2 p.m. he went to visit members of his family and spent over two hours with them in what proved to be his last farewell. Firing became heavier during this time but at about 4 p.m. it died down allowing the two to return to the Archbishop's residence at the Jesuit college in Bukavu.

The next day, the 28th. October, Mzee Christopher set out, this time with Boni, the trusty chauffeur of the Jesuit community. In spite of artillery and machine-gun fire they approached the soldiers who were requisitioning vehicles; he was able to speak to the new military Commander and spoke over the local radio, reassuring the population that the new Commanding Officer had power over the bandits and robbers who were making their lives intolerable. He returned home, exhausted but hardly feeling pain or fatigue, so glad was he to have been of use to his people.

Next morning, the 29th October, Mzee set out to rescue six Tutsi Trappistine Sisters

who were fleeing for their lives. He managed to find them and to take them in a Combi, concealed under a mattress, to the Convent of the Company of Mary, next to the Jesuit College. After a meal, he went with the faithful Boni to a Meeting of the Defence Committee due to take place at 2 p.m. Two hours later a great explosion shook the house and was followed by the noise of heavy and light arms that seemed to come from the direction of the Cathedral. The firing gradually died down, until at 6 p.m. Archbishop Munzihirwa left the meeting place to go back to the Jesuit college.

The car had to pass a cross-roads where there was a military presence. A hail of bullets brought the car to a halt. Archbishop Munzihirwa, a crucifix in his hand, stepped out of the car followed by Boni. They were seized and made to stand, Mzee against a pole, Boni against a tree a few yards away.

There are no records of what happened next - but the following morning the bodies were found. There was a rosary near Mzee's hand and a look of quiet serenity on his face. It took all day to get permission to remove the bodies; the following morning Mzee Christopher was quietly buried outside his Cathedral, as we have described above.

THE WORD THAT LIVES

Morning Prayer from the Galla of Kenya

Oh God, it is in peace that I have rested,
Make me pass the day in peace.

You have prepared in peace the way that I have followed.

Make me pass the day in peace.

Make me walk straight on this road.

If I speak, take calumny from my lips.

If I hunger, take away my complaints.

If I enjoy plenty, take away my pride.

May I pass the day in calling on you,

Oh Master, who knows no other master.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

ARRIVALS

Sr. Gloria Sedes from Spain

Sr. Daphne Alphonso from Mexico

Celia Natanek (White Sister Associate Member) from Poland

Loreto Rey (White Sister Associate Member) from Spain

DEPARTURES

Sr. Anita O'Connor to Malawi ①

Sr. Nicole Gregoire to Kenya ②



Change of address

If you are about to move, or have moved, and would still like to receive the magazine please fill in the form below and return it to:
‘White Fathers - White Sisters’ 129, Lichfield Road,
Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 2SA.

Your Name:

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..... Post Code

New Address:

.....

.....

..... Post Code

ST. ANTHONY'S NOVENA

The White Fathers' annual Novena of thanksgiving to St. Anthony of Padua runs from Saturday 13th. June (the Feast of St. Anthony) to Sunday 21st. June this year. During the nine days of the Novena, Holy Mass is offered each day for the intentions of our benefactors in all our communities. White Fathers especially remember our benefactors in their prayers at this time. We invite readers to send their Petitions which will be placed at the Altar during the Novena.

The training programme for a future White Father covers many years and costs a great deal of money. A number of years ago the Bursary Fund was set up to help us in this work and since then our friends and benefactors have been generously contributing to the Fund. They share in a very real way in our missionary work with their practical help and prayers.

When it was founded the Bursary fund needed a patron and St. Anthony of Padua was chosen. He was someone who was a missionary both in Europe and in Africa. St. Anthony worked with Muslims in Morocco and in this issue we see a little about how we are continuing this tradition.

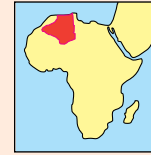
St. Anthony was from Lisbon, born in 1195 and christened Ferdinand. As a young man he joined the Augustinians and stayed with them for nine years. While there the bodies of five martyred Franciscans, who worked in Morocco, were brought back. St. Anthony was so impressed with this that he joined the Order of Francis, being a contemporary of his, in 1220 and took the religious name of Anthony. He then travelled to North Africa and worked among the Moors.

Due to ill health he had to return to Italy and stayed in a small hermitage spending most of his time praying and reading the Scriptures. St. Anthony was ordained to the priesthood and

moved to various places throughout northern Italy and southern France developing his intellectual gifts and also his charisma for preaching. He retired to Padua and he died in Arcella, near the town, on 13th. June, 1231, at the age of 36. St. Anthony was canonized on Pentecost of the following year and his relics are still kept in the Padua basilica which bears his name.

St. Anthony is often invoked as a helper in times of need. This may come from the fact that he was associated with a law in Padua which exempted from imprisonment those who could not pay their fines or debts. Some statues of St. Anthony show him with the Child Jesus but ours, above, depicts him with a small basket of bread handing out a loaf. This aptly expresses his devotion to justice, the care he gave to the poor and the tradition of 'St. Anthony's Bread' which survives to this day. What saint could be more fitting for a missionary students fund. He was drawn to Africa and even when he was forced to return to Italy his missionary dream stayed with him for the rest of his life.

FATHER JOHN MACWILLIAM



This is part of a letter which Fr. John wrote for a parish vocation day. It explains the White Father vocation especially our work in Algeria.

I would like to tell you a bit about myself and my work here in Algeria, and relate it to our presence as Catholic missionaries in a Muslim part of Africa. Our situation here is very different from most of the continent where people are able to choose their religion more or less freely and where there are already indigenous Bishops and clergy. Here, in the land of St Augustine of Hippo, things go much more slowly!

The White Fathers is an international Catholic missionary society whose purpose is the primary evangelisation of the peoples of Africa, that

is to those who have not yet heard or accepted the Good News. So although we may find ourselves with parishes to care for, our main work is among non-Christians. We work invariably within a diocese, whose own clergy provide most of the pastoral care. We were founded in 1868 by Cardinal Charles Lavignerie, the French Archbishop of Algiers, and placed under the protection of Our Lady Immaculate (our feast-day is 8th. December). We normally live in communities of three or four priests and brothers and adopt a 'simple way of life' without actually taking vows of poverty. There are about 2,100 White Fathers today, of whom slightly under half are working in Africa, the others being either elderly and therefore 'retired' in their countries of origin, or engaged in vocation work, administration or in the formation of our students, who number about 300.

In recent years there has been a marked drop in vocations from Europe and North America, and a rise in those from Africa, India and the Philippines. However, with many older priests and brothers dying (about 50 each year) and less vocations than before (about 20 new White Fathers made their final oaths in 1996) it seems likely that our numbers will drop to about 1,400 in ten years' time, and by then many of us will be from the Third World. This will inevitably create changes, particularly in terms of the financial support we can hope for from our families and home parishes, but the spirit of our founder will surely remain, and there is still much work to do. The shock of what happened in Rwanda, a country to which we had brought Christianity and where the people are nearly all Christian, makes us realise that it is not simply a question of numbers, but of depth of faith.

North Africa is different, since the Church here is almost entirely composed of foreigners.



The statue of St. Anthony in the chapel at the White Father's house in Sutton Coldfield. In previous years we have had numerous requests for such statues. As far as we know it is unique and was specially commissioned for the 'St. Anthony's Burse'.

Mother and child look out on what can be a hostile world



There are Algerians who are Christian but for the most part they have to keep it secret, sometimes even from their families. The violence of the past six years has cost about 80,000 lives, including a number of priests and nuns, other foreigners, teachers, journalists and other professions. Christians are therefore at risk, though in fact the massacres include anyone so we are not really much more at risk than the people among whom we live. However, it is not generally possible, at present, to have an open and public parish life with the sort of activities you would find in England. But the Church is here, with our Archbishop, Mgr. Henri Teissier, and two other Bishops (the fourth Bishop,

Mgr. Claverie of Oran, was killed there on 1st. August, 1996), about 100 priests and maybe 250 sisters. Many of the foreign Christians work in the oil industry, some are students, some in teaching, in development, or in embassies. There are Christians married to Algerians (quietly with their families). There are many migrants, mainly from West Africa, trying to get to Europe; I sometimes celebrate Mass in English with those from Ghana and Nigeria. Culturally the Church here is very French but this is slowly changing. I cannot say how many Algerian Christians there are, because nobody really knows. Some are baptised, others are on the way, or simply searching. Many call themselves Christian because they 'feel' closer to us than to Islam. Some obtain Bibles but do not realise that the Word of God is really a person, not just a book. What is clear is that for a huge number of people with whom we are in contact, Christianity is a religion to be

respected and tolerated, perhaps even loved. Others mistrust us, but there is a long and sad history of hostility and mistrust which has to be gradually dispelled - this is why we are here.

Three years ago, when the violence was already bad and directed against foreigners, we, the White Fathers, had three communities in the Archdiocese of Algiers, one at the basilica of Our Lady of Africa in Algiers (where we were founded), one in another part of town, and one in Tizi Ouzou, the capital of the Berber-speaking Kabyle region, about sixty miles to the east of Algiers, in the mountains. On 27th. December, 1994, the three French White Fathers at Tizi Ouzou were joined by a fourth (a Belgian) who came from Algiers to celebrate the feast of St John with them and his own 70th. birthday. Terrorists came to the house and killed all four of them. Since then there have been three further killings of religious: Sr. Odette

(Nov. 95), the seven monks of the monastery of Our Lady of the Atlas at Tibhirine (May 96) and Bishop Claverie (Aug. 96).

The death of our community at Tizi Ouzou was a hard blow. One of them, Fr Christian Chessel, was only 36, and was the cornerstone of our future presence in the Kabyle region. The others, Fr Alain Dieulangard (75), Fr Jean Chevillard (69) and Fr Charlie Deckers (70), all knew the area and its people well, and were much loved. The tremendous show of sympathy and sorrow by a huge number of Algerians at their funeral indicates how much most Muslims believe that we are their brothers, not their enemies. Sadly there remain some who think differently, and we pray daily for them. The White Fathers decided that we should not abandon our presence at Tizi Ouzou, but should start to prepare the ground for a new community. Since I was at that time coming to the end of my studies of Arabic and Islam in Rome, we decided that I should begin that preparation. So I came to Algeria in September, 1995, spending part of the time

in Algiers and part in Tizi Ouzou. The main roads are reasonably safe by day, but the police place restrictions on us when we are there. At present I cannot go out and meet people - many come to us at *la maison des pères* instead.

Perhaps at this stage I should say a word about myself. I was born in Wimbledon 49 years ago. As a child I lived abroad quite a bit (Sudan, Somalia, Germany) and went to boarding school in Sussex (Worth Abbey). When I was 34 I decided to join the White Fathers and entered the eight-year programme of formation. This comprised two years of studies in London, followed by a Spiritual Year in Switzerland (in French) and then two years' experience of living and working in a W.F. community in Tunisia, where I taught English. Then I did a further three years' studies at the Missionary Institute London. I was ordained priest in July, 1992, and appointed to Rome for three years' further studies of Arabic and Islam. Knowing about the faith, language and culture of the people among whom we live is

essential if we are to be close to them, so the extra years of study, even at my 'advanced' age, were well worth it. I am now trying to find the time to learn the Kabyle language of the people of Tizi Ouzou, rather than using French all the time.



We are hoping that next September we may be able to start up again with our new community. One other priest will have completed his studies by then and hopes to return to Tizi Ouzou where he was as a student. Another elderly French priest may make up the team. Our principal work will be opening a library for university students, something that the former community was preparing to do. This will be a point of contact for us with many young Algerians, as well as providing a useful service to them. English, medicine and law will probably be the main subjects included in the library initially. We will also continue to provide pastoral care for the Catholics and for any other Christians there. And we will be available to meet the people and answer their questions, which may mean a simple explanation of 'what Christians believe', or even a full programme of instruction leading to baptism. Despite all that however, we would see our primary task as simply 'being there among the people and witnessing to them by our presence'. Our vocation is not so much to *do* as to *be*. We are disciples of Christ, we try to live as such, and to be open to those called by the Holy Spirit to accept us

SISTER BRIDE W.S. - R.I.P.

An appreciation of Sr. Bride W.S. R.I.P. (1909-1998)

"Five bright-faced young girls gathered at Victoria station shortly after 8 a.m. last Friday to start their journey to Algiers, where they are to enter the novitiate of the White Sisters of our Lady of Africa ... they are the first English recruits to enter that order."

So ran the announcement in 'The Universe' on the 23rd. September, 1932. Sister Bride was one of those first girls, though from Donegal, Ireland, not England.

among them. We don't expect to see miraculous results in terms of hundreds of baptisms, but we have absolute faith that our presence helps draw people closer to God, whether in Islam or in Christianity - there is only one God, and we are called to be his among others.

One final thing I would like to share with you, and that arises from the meaning of the word 'missionary'. It means 'one who is sent', and we are all 'sent' by God, present in the Church from where we come. You, in England, have sent me to the people of Algeria. I am one of *your* missionaries. I say this because I want you to remember me, and others like me, in your prayers. It can be a lonely task, with all sorts of difficulties (Algeria is just one of many countries in Africa wracked by violence and suffering). I need to know that those back home are praying for me, that I am not forgotten. Other support for our work, whether in letting people know about us or financial aid for training our priests and brothers, is important, but for me the most important of these is your prayers. I keep you in my prayers too.

Mary Bridget Irvine was the last but one of a family of 12 children, 6 boys and 6 girls. She came to London and was educated at the Sacred Heart School, Hammersmith. After obtaining her Higher School Certificate in 1929, she stayed some time teaching at the same school.

It was at this moment and while Bride was considering religious life that her twin brother, Frank, who had joined the White Fathers, died of T.B. This tragedy caused a lasting wound in Bride's heart, but did not deter her. She joined the White Sisters at Heston, Middlesex, in spite of her sister's protests,

"You will never last. It'll be just like Frank."
- Well, "last" she did - for 67 years!

The five postulants, including Sr. Myra R.I.P., did their novitiate in St. Charles, Algiers. After their first profession in 1934 they returned to

Three years later she had the joy of being appointed to Bwanda, Uganda, where there was the Mother House of the Banbikira, the second Congregation ever to be founded in Africa. Here Bride started her long service of 30 years in education in Africa. She wrote of the years, 1937 - 1947, "Ten very happy years getting to know the students, their parents, their home life ... their respect for their chiefs, and those in authority and how from an early age the children learn gradually how to get the most out of the land."

Later Bride taught African Sisters and other young women in a Teacher Training College and so was among those who helped to build a solid foundation for generations of African girls. Respect for African culture was shown in many ways, such as teaching traditional basketry and articles made from 'lubugo' (bark-cloth). Bride later taught at Nabbingo, the first ever Catholic Girls' Secondary School. She was a real disciplinarian with the students. They however, had great respect and admiration for her, recognising her outstanding qualities as a teacher who had their own good at heart.

In 1972 Sister Bride returned to Britain for good, "crying her eyes out on leaving Uganda". Back in Britain, Bride rendered many services including serving as Provincial Bursar and in Bearsden, Scotland, devoting herself to the spiritual welfare of patients in a Glasgow hospital. She wrote, "It would be difficult to say who was happier, the patients or myself".

The last years of Bride's life were clouded over as her mental faculties declined. But she was always smiling. God came to awaken Sister Bride to the glories of his light on the 28th. January this year.

England for a while. Sister Bride helped in promotion work and in giving English lessons to our Sisters from other countries.

May She Rest in Peace



Let Us Pray

*For the following
who have died recently:*

Mr John Bedford, 1 Sewell Close, Cold Ash,
Newbury, Berks.

Belinda Broderick, Ireland.

Mr James Burke, 13 Gwendoline Street,
Liverpool.

Mr James Joseph Clements &
Mrs Susan Clements,
2 Saint Mark's Court, Bilton, Rugby.
(formerly of New Stevenston, Scotland)

Mr Fred Collingwood, Pelaw, Gateshead,
Tyne & Wear.

Miss Monica Connolly,
41 St Margarets Road, New Moston,
Manchester.

Mr Jim Cosgrove, 27 Bowden Drive,
Glasgow.

Mr John Coughlan, Dublin (late of Riddrie,
Glasgow).

Kit Foley, Radstock, Bath.

Mrs Anastasia Ford, Liverpool.

Mrs Kathleen M. Heath, 53 Rycroft,
Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

Margot Kane.

Miss Bridget Kelly, 53 Barlock Street,
Possilpark, Glasgow.

Mr George F. Littlejohns,
66 Sefton Moss Villas, Liverpool.

Mrs Rose McCauley, 1 King Square,
West Calder, West Lothian.

Mrs Kathleen McDonald,
Abbeyfield House, High Street, Selkirk.

Mrs M. McGuire, 20 St. Andrews Gardens,
Airdrie, Lanarkshire.

Miss McSheffrey, East Brae, East Wemyss,
Fife.

Mrs Margaret May, 4 Cedar Avenue,
Preston, Lancs.

Brother John Meenie W.F.
The White Fathers, Oak Lodge,
48 Totteridge Common, London.

Mr Milite, 3 Thicket Crescent, Sutton,
Surrey.

Mr M. B. Morrin,
67 Calverley Moor Avenue, Pudsey,
West Yorkshire.

Mr J. Mullen, 17 Sheila Street, Robroyston,
Glasgow.

Miss M. Murphy, 455 Royston Road 1/1,
Glasgow.

Mrs Sarah Murphy, 57 Barrachnie Crescent,
Garrowhill, Glasgow (sister of Fr. Tom
Conway W.F.).

Mrs M. O'Connell, Glasgow.

Mr J O'Hare, 86 High Street, Newry,
Co.Down, N.Ireland.

Miss L. M. Potter, Pilgrims Wood,
Sandy Lane, Guildford, Surrey.

Mr Bernard Reeves, 69 Conway Road,
Southgate, London.

Mr John Lewis Robertson, 7 Rye Crescent,
Barnmulloch, Glasgow.

Mrs M. Seenan, 304 Chirnside Road,

Hillington, Glasgow (mother of
Fr. Hugh Seenan W.F.).

Lena Simmonds, Parklands, Thorne,
Doncaster.

Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus Order -
European Province

Mr Francis Cecil Storrs, The Hill House,
Broadway, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

Mrs Stuttle, Llanishen, Cardiff.

Mrs C. Thorp, Flat 2 - Wigorn House,
Wigorn Road, Bearwood, Smethwick.

Mrs M. E. Usher, 56 Victoria Road, Crosby,
Liverpool.

Miss L. Zammit, Malta.

*"Come, you whom my Father
has blessed,
take for your heritage
the kingdom prepared for you
since the foundation of the world".*

(Mt. 25.34)



May they rest in peace

PLEASE NOTE - We attempt to put the names received in the Obituary List as soon as we receive them. Unfortunately sometimes we are notified just after the magazine has gone to print and therefore there may be a delay in publication. The following are the last dates for receiving names for the next four issues:

Magazine Issue	Date
August-September, 1998.	21st. May, 1998.
October-November, 1998.	21st. July, 1998.
December-January, 1999.	21st. September, 1998.
February-March, 1999.	21st. November, 1998.

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