

Summer 2015

Science and Charity: Rival Catholic Visions for Humanitarian Practice at the End of French Rule in Cameroon

Charlotte Walker-Said
John Jay College

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Follow this and additional works at: http://academicworks.cuny.edu/jj_pubs

 Part of the [African History Commons](#), and the [European History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Charlotte Walker-Said, "Science and Charity: Rival Catholic Visions for Humanitarian Practice at the End of French Rule in Cameroon," *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 33:2 2015.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications and Research by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact AcademicWorks@cuny.edu.

SCIENCE AND CHARITY

Rival Catholic Visions for Humanitarian Practice at The End of Empire

Charlotte Walker-Said

John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)

"We must cultivate a sense of international responsibility for the child.... As confident internationalists ... do we dare extend our love to the very ends of the earth and remove the limits of our charity?"¹ With this valiant challenge, Raoul Delgrange, the president of the Bureau international catholique de l'enfance (BICE), a Francophone Catholic social organization, greeted the 1955 BICE International Congress in Venice, praising the work of "1,008 International Organizations" that would transform Christian charity in light of a new "global reality ... with an emboldened sense of global need."² In that same year, Father Thomas Mongo, an African priest who had been named the successor to Monsignor Pierre Bonneau, the French bishop of the diocese of Douala in Cameroon, was facing a more local reality: purges and uprisings in the region as part of a violent nationalist insurgency.³ To reconcile his people and his congregants and to inspire benevolence in the midst of anticolonial political upheaval, Mongo drew up plans to establish a local pilgrimage site and build new churches, and, critically, began preaching more intensively on defining charity as "the love of your neighbor."⁴

Analyzing humanitarianism during the years of decolonization reveals a marked divergence between local social patterns and transnational ideology. The Catholic Church at this juncture fostered two humanitarian cultures: a culture of local charity, based on intimate compassion that was inspired by piety and strong social relations; and a cosmopolitical humanitarian culture that emphasized a mass-based emancipatory form of Christian consciousness that sought to widen solidarities and transform possibilities.⁵ This article explores how the idiom of charity was envisioned and enacted by African and European agents in the last decade of colonial rule and illuminates the process



by which these parallel and competing interpretations of compassionate work gained greater or lesser currency among distinct publics.

During the 1950s, the BICE and the French trust territory of Cameroon were two spheres of intensive contemplation on the subject of charity where African and European ecclesiastical leaders considered the commitments to which Christianity and its institutions were bound in the rapidly emerging postcolonial world. In Europe, Vatican representatives and clerical and lay directors of the BICE were actively considering Pope Pius XI's 1927 conceptual formulation of "political charity," in which he called for the Church to move beyond a bounded "social and economic charity" toward "a more vast charity" that could liberate entire societies and fight against "remote and foundational causes" of evil and injustice throughout the world.⁶ During the 1950s, the Church implemented "political charity" as the framework for a new postwar strategy intended to widen its solidarity and stimulate a new sense of responsibility among European Catholics.⁷ Another factor influencing the enactment of this mandate was the fact that Vatican and European Catholic leaders perceived the dismantling of empire as the dawn of new international political rivalries and sought to expand international Catholic organizations as a forceful means of countering the influences of Communist, as well as secular and Anglo-Saxon Protestant values in education, health, social assistance, and poor relief.⁸

In the political context that emerged in Cameroon after World War II and the 1944 Brazzaville Conference, African Catholic leaders were forced to confront nationalist and Communist ideologies that politicized spiritual life and responded in part by reinvigorating the role of local charitable action.⁹ As part of this strategy, Monsignor Thomas Mongo espoused "intimate charity": a human closeness that could cure social ills.¹⁰ Mongo's vision, which African Catholic leaders later extended, was based on a Pauline conception of charity, which linked private religious devotion to neighborly compassion. Organized through village networks in the interwar period and later through territory-wide Catholic Action—a socio-religious movement originally launched through the French missions, which emphasized collective responsibility for alleviating human suffering—"intimate charity" typified poor relief and social work in Cameroon's villages, towns, and cities.¹¹ "Political charity" and "intimate charity" were not strict terminologies applied to respective European or African conceptualizations of religious work in the years leading up to national independence in Africa, but they do provide a rhetorical baseline from which historians can perceive idealized abstractions and locate evidence of concrete action resulting therefrom.

While scholarship on humanitarianism as part of the legitimation of empire has expanded considerably in recent years, fewer historians have analyzed the humanitarian aspirations of the Catholic Church in the transitional years of decolonization.¹² Some scholars, including Michael Barnett and Gregory Mann, have remarked that the postwar period ushered in a new style of humanitarianism in which nongovernmental and religious organizations engaged seriously with world affairs and transformed the boundaries of

empathy.¹³ Other historians have suggested paying closer attention to Christian solidarities that arose during the late colonial period to better understand the emergence of non-national identities that shaped debates on human rights and questions of sovereignty.¹⁴ Catholic organizations, sponsored by missionary societies, the Vatican, and national churches, had become critical sub-state agents working in Africa throughout the years of intensifying colonialism.¹⁵ After World War II, Pope Pius XII invited Catholics to “collaborate internationally” in the service of creating a “more active Church in the world” with a greater influence in intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the BICE took this message particularly to heart.¹⁶ As Mann has revealed, these transnational agents offering aid, social science, and activism to Africa soon grew powerful enough to assume functions previously located within the state and local political authority.¹⁷ This “international-mindedness,” as Mark Mazower has termed it, formed part of the expansion of partnerships between government and international institutions that deployed science and ethical universalisms to forge a true international community in which they would be the global governors.¹⁸ Critically, this globalist sensibility had serious consequences for decidedly civic, communal, and fraternal forms of humanitarian relief maturing in Africa, and particularly in French Cameroon.

This article’s presentation of the rival visions for Catholic humanitarian practice at the end of empire begins with an analysis of the BICE as a critical force in faith-based humanitarian work in the postwar decades. It then presents the longstanding traditions of mutual support among African Catholics in Cameroon, which confronted and eventually lost ground to the BICE’s new charitable frameworks.¹⁹ In the long run, the BICE’s vision of a supranational Church united through international relief efforts bolstered the European clergy’s resistance to decolonizing Church institutions in Cameroon, which they believed required “a new phase of evangelization.”²⁰ Concerns about Africans’ “patriotic preoccupations,” “demographic hemorrhage,” and the “disruption of village piety”²¹ at the end of empire produced a nearly unanimous sense among European Catholics that Africans would very soon become “a people without religion, without spiritual leaders, who are ready to become the prey of communism in the near future.”²² The remaining sections of this article reveal how European skepticism of African religious conviction and pious work was constructed in the final years of colonial rule, as well as how it directly resulted in the BICE’s paradoxical modernity project to spiritually and morally rehabilitate Africans through a new charitable paradigm based on international coordination rather than fraternal assistance and mutual aid. This ideological development is revealed in part through an analysis of the 1957 International Catholic Conference on African Childhood held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which was sponsored by the BICE and attended by social scientists, government authorities, ecclesiastical leaders, and representatives of the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Centre international de l’enfance (CIE), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

This conference was the culmination of over a decade of international Catholic deliberation on the future of both the faith and compassionate work in the world, and sought to build consensus around strategies for rendering religious power more transformative in decolonizing regions.²³ By examining this conference, as well as the years leading up to its convening in Yaoundé, this article presents a skeptical European lay and ecclesiastical Catholic leadership, who, rather than promoting African leadership in the Church in Cameroon, posited that a “universal fatherhood” and an “international brotherhood” in the form of transnational Catholic organizations should direct religious work in the fragile new nation.²⁴ Building on Mann’s study of “nongovernmentality” and the power of international agencies to effectively capture forms of political rationality in Africa during decolonization, this article examines how nongovernmental lay and Catholic ecclesiastical agents devised religious rationales for eroding African sovereignty over the Catholic Church in Cameroon and banished African influence in late twentieth-century Christian humanitarian philosophies.

The BICE and Catholic Universality

Founded in 1948 as an organization devoted to “using Christ’s message to justify international humanitarian aid for children,” the BICE noted at its inception that the “era of radical change” in which it operated required new commitments that would engender revolutionary progress in support of child welfare.²⁵ The BICE’s mission and strategies reflected interwar and postwar European Catholicism’s emphasis on recasting its religious identity through the creation of organizations that would operate as the social and cultural axis of human rehabilitation.²⁶ In the years of waning colonial rule, the BICE’s leadership, largely comprised of Francophone clergy and laity, called for “worldwide child protection” and the creation of a consortium of “moral training organizations” that would be tasked with translating the Catholic faith into sustained social action “for others.”²⁷ These “others” were notably the children of Africa, as well as the “unadapted” and “deficient” children of Europe.²⁸

Scholarly clergymen, high-ranking bishops, and lay technical experts like Henri Bissonier, chair of psychopathology at the Université catholique de Louvain, Margaret Bédard of the American Catholic Sociological Society, and Abbé Charles-Édouard Bourgeois, a Quebecois priest and medical doctor, among others, managed the BICE throughout the 1950s. Linkages between Catholic universities, research institutes, and the Vatican grew stronger in this period, and the BICE developed a press organ to publish collaborative results—the technical journal *L’Enfance dans le monde*—and hosted international congresses as a means of strengthening European Catholic consensus on what constituted a western common culture on child protection.²⁹ The BICE’s work reflected the increasingly transnational dimension of social research, which

was informing legislation, societal debate, administrative practices, and professionalization pathways in postwar European nation-states. In this period, a plethora of industries, ministries, foundations, and church organizations instilled new scientific norms for social welfare in western countries and structured the knowledge regimes in these domains.³⁰

Increasingly throughout the 1950s, the BICE was keenly interested not only in organizing charitable efforts but also in producing social scientific knowledge on which benevolent work would be based. Describing itself as “neither a federation of national organs nor a national movement,” but rather, a “technical bureau,” the organization gained consultative status at UNESCO, the UN Economic and Social Council, and UNICEF.³¹ The BICE distinguished itself by pressing for the “heroic support of children” and professed “an at times prophetic devotion to a cause” of identifying children as the most worthy benefactors of the gifts of specialists, researchers, experts, and consultants.³² It fully acknowledged that this emphasis forsook adults, who the BICE deemed “unchangeable,” in favor of those “whose souls are more open to the world.”³³ Even more importantly, by upholding the child as a pure innocent and the only incontestable rights-bearer, the organization could segregate morally deserving from undeserving publics. This remissive formulation of charitable entitlement was used to establish ideologies of a “universal fatherhood,” who would be responsible for social and humanitarian work for children, rather than kin and communities.

“Universal fatherhood” as BICE leaders and Monsignor Angelo Dell’Acqua, their strongest advocate in the Vatican, explained, was a means of envisioning Pope Pius XI’s call for “political charity” by advocating for a “united human family,” with a “sense of responsibility among the men from the farthest regions for men in the poorest.”³⁴ Père Marie-Dominique Chenu, a BICE affiliate and Catholic theologian, reasoned that “man should not withdraw into inter-individual charity,” but rather recognize what can be done “for the common good of the world.”³⁵ This form of charitable boundary crossing was couched as a form of Christian transcendence and moral liberation, rationalized through the determinism of crisis.³⁶ According to the BICE, Africans had, through lack of social reform and their “natural mutualism,” brought about proletarianism and failed to foster a “favorable climate for Christianity.”³⁷ Thus, to accomplish truly transformative work on the continent, where polygamy, malnutrition, illiteracy, poverty, women’s subjugation, and unemployment continued to deprive children of their rights, a more effective form of charity based on Catholic internationalism would be deployed.³⁸

Intimate Charity

In colonial-era Cameroon, African priests, catechists, and nuns were the most common and effective messengers of scripture and doctrine, as well as leaders

of pious works, in part because missionary societies suffered from a dearth of foreign workers in every decade in which the Christian churches were present.³⁹ In the early 1920s, the Nlong Mission in southern Cameroon succeeded in building a Catholic community of roughly five thousand Africans through the voluntary work of Ewondo and Bassa catechists who translated scripture, said mass, and heard confessions for their respective ethno-linguistic communities. Nlong catechists organized so much devotional work that they often complained of being overburdened with responsibilities, which included teaching, ministering the sick, visiting the faithful, assisting with religious services, organizing construction for churches, chapels, and seminaries, and even disciplining sinners.⁴⁰ As much as they organized voluntary networks and recruited aids, they could not keep up with the level of need. After several “interminable” meetings with French missionaries in 1927, the Nlong catechists decided to expand the ranks of Catholic volunteers by starting a Bassa chapter of the *Confrérie du Très Saint Sacrement*, a pious fraternal organization that would assist in construction work and organizing Bassa Eucharistic ministry, as well as schedule rotations for village visits and employ catechumens and postulants⁴¹ to make bricks and lead prayer sessions, which would free senior catechists to attend to higher level religious work.⁴²

By 1946, roughly five hundred thousand Catholics and catechumens across Cameroon networked through 258 religious associations and 2,200 villages with a Catholic affiliation to organize, deliberate, and execute necessary actions for the improvement of social welfare, which included battling illness, unemployment, judicial corruption, spouselessness, polygamy, and widow inheritance, among other challenges.⁴³ The most popular Catholic collective in Cameroon was the *Confrérie de Sainte Marie* (*Ekoan Maria* in Ewondo), a pious confraternal organization originally launched by the German Pallottine mission that built community through public prayer, social discourse, and charitable works.⁴⁴ Its success launched other pious associations including *Ekoan Anna*, *Ekoan Agnès*, *Ekoan Joseph*, the *Confrérie de l'Adoration réparatrice* (*Ekpa-Elugu*), the *Confrérie du Saint-Sacrement*, and others, including the Association of Saint Louis de Gonzague, which recruited young boys to be catechists, teachers, builders, and masons in rural congregations.⁴⁵ The interwar period witnessed the largest expansion of pious collectives and confraternal organizations, which described themselves as “public associations in the service of the Catholic Church for a more human society.”⁴⁶ Collectives such as the *Confrérie des cinq plaies de Jésus* led dangerous and subversive initiatives in the realm of humanitarian intervention such as rescuing brides from polygamous or forced marriages, uniting spouses without parental consent, and challenging chiefs and judges in tribunals.⁴⁷

In 1938, Cameroon's French missionary workers were pulled from rural mission stations by the *mobilisation générale*. In the years that followed in which Europeans were called to the front, African priests and catechists rose to lead congregations and new spiritual collectives, celebrating all the sacraments

and developing charitable consciousness.⁴⁸ Thomas Mongo began his ministry during the war years in southwestern Cameroon, a placement that revealed to him the diversity of Christian faith, experience, and adversity among Cameroon's diverse ethno-regional societies, and inspired his passion for direct and localized social engagement.⁴⁹ After witnessing the suffering of lepers, he and a group of African Catholic nurses and French volunteers responded by founding the *Léproserie de Dibamba* and the *Léproserie Saint Michel de Nden*.⁵⁰ These clinics were not solely managed by priests and missionaries, as Mongo organized the *Fraternité des lépreux croyants*, a religious confraternity for lepers that assisted in healing and hospice work to strengthen solidarity and promote mutual aid among the afflicted.⁵¹

Expanding pious brotherhoods and lay and ministerial associations of Catholics whose goals included evangelization, social support, marriage reform, and poor relief was Mongo's most intensive sphere of Catholic action.⁵² He was the leader of the *Petits frères et petites sœurs du Père de Foucauld*, whose members went on to launch their own movements for children's education and catechism (*Mouvements de l'enfance*), and was instrumental in leading *Ekoan Maria* in Douala. Mongo also believed that charity was most needed in responding to the challenges of young adults who faced unemployment, poverty, and despair, which is what prompted his leadership in the Young Catholic Worker movement, or *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne (JOC)*, which was launched in Cameroon in 1954.⁵³ The success of African Catholic youth movements in accomplishing change both in outward signs of faith and in social renovation was noted at the 1957 BICE Conference, where French doctors and social workers sought to put the movements' social networks and rural-urban linkages to use to launch new initiatives.⁵⁴

The Church and the Politics of Skepticism

Although the 1950s in Cameroon were marked by an increase in pilgrimages, outdoor liturgies, and religious festivals attended by nearly one million baptized African Christians,⁵⁵ the European ecclesiastical hierarchy expressed acute anxiety about the rise of liberalism and the attenuation of spirituality as a result of what one French Social Catholic termed "the regrettable crisis of progress."⁵⁶ Gloomy predictions about Catholicism's future in Cameroon stirred tensions between the indigenous and foreign clergy as well as between Church leaders and African believers. European leaders of the Catholic Church ignited controversy by repudiating the radical anticolonial *Union des populations du Cameroun* party, which enjoyed considerable support, and by openly doubting whether African Catholics possessed the moral steadfastness and spiritual earnestness required to sustain the Church in times to come.⁵⁷

French pessimism after the war sharply contrasted with optimism and respect regarding African piety in earlier decades.⁵⁸ For these skeptics, the

Douala riots of 1945 were the first indication of moral failure and the decline of Christianity in Cameroon.⁵⁹ Then, the UPC's openly hostile stance against the Catholic Church and its alliance with the Confédération générale du travail (CGT) further confirmed African moral backsliding. Cameroonian nationalist and leftist newspapers like *Le Patriote kamerunais*, *La Voix du peuple*, and *Le Crabe noir* published vitriolic letters and editorials calling for Marxist revolution, total social and economic upheaval, and the expulsion of all Catholics, which deeply unsettled the European clergy.⁶⁰ Catholic press organs responded with harsh denunciations of African labor agitators, calling them dupes and "a mass of malcontents ... who believe those who spread calumnies."⁶¹

Criticism and cynicism also marked exchanges between the leadership of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, or Spiritain Mission, in Cameroon and the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith⁶² in Rome regarding the appointment of Africans as bishops in the territory.⁶³ African priests faced new suspicion of their spiritual fidelity and their capacity to command authority in a volatile postwar Africa, and were overlooked for leadership positions even though the Vatican insisted on diversifying the African episcopate according to the exhortations of Pope Pius XII, who was in favor of a truly global and universal Church fully embedded in local culture.⁶⁴ Even though Pope Leo XIII had been the first to officially accept nationalism as a value compatible with Catholic doctrine in 1891 and by 1951 had Pius XII's encyclical *Evangelii Praecones* called for complete decolonization, the European clergy in Cameroon, and particularly Archbishop René Graffin, considered the African clergy too nationalist and repeatedly provided evidence of African priests' and lay ministers' "Marxist sentiments" to strategically retain white authority over Catholic Cameroon.⁶⁵

Academic scholarship in the 1950s seemed to concur with the European clergy's concerns regarding the state of society in Africa. European social scientists and the French media published ominous accounts of postwar retrogression in Cameroon's growing urban sectors. From studies on rising poverty and declining public health to articles on the falling birth rate and social fragmentation exhibited in divorce courts and orphanages, the worldly priests and missionaries of Cameroon could stay well informed of the deterioration of their pious flocks.⁶⁶ Reports circulating among the leadership of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost repeated that Africans' faith was "not profound," that the laity was "not transformed," and that their "superficial" attachment to Christ and the sacraments meant that their moral training was incomplete.⁶⁷ Furthermore, they reasoned, the divorce, adultery, out-of-wedlock births, polygamy, alcoholism, crime, and gender inequality present in Cameroonian society was strong evidence of a populace with an intractable "pagan soul."⁶⁸ Although Christian Europe provided ample illustrations of these very same social ills, African Catholics faced growing suspicion of their capabilities to reform their environment and behaviors, which eventually

manifested itself in the Catholic elite's internationally coordinated humanitarian strategies for more vigorous moral improvement.

The 1957 BICE Conference

Given these social and political realities, the context of Cameroon as the site of the 1957 BICE International Catholic Conference on African Childhood is salient. The conference organizing committee, including Monsignor Charles-Édouard Bourgeois, the head of the BICE administrative council, Archbishop René Graffin, and a constituency of French Spiritain leaders, chose the territory because of its "international status" and its recent history of political transformation and religious disruption.⁶⁹ At the 1949 and 1956 conferences of the French Cameroon missions, which laid much of the groundwork for the 1957 BICE conference, the clergy equivocated over how effective African Catholic social movements were at fundamentally adapting communities, and whether new systems and institutions were required in coming years to reinforce moral imperatives.⁷⁰ Advocates for and against Catholic Action and African Christian youth movements' undertakings did not fall cleanly along racial lines. Bishop Bonneau and Abbé Jean Noddings, a Catholic Action leader from Lille, ardently pressured the Cameroon episcopate and the apostolic delegate for French Africa for more resources to continue their "profound work."⁷¹ Mongo also emphasized the findings of the French Social Catholic researcher, Joseph Wilbois, director of the *École d'administration et d'affaires*, who had concluded that social action in Cameroon had led to significant improvements in conditions for women, children, and married couples.⁷²

Monsignor Paul Bouque, Bishop of Nkongsamba, as well as Graffin, however, concluded that more had to be done "in order to influence everyday life." What was required was to do more than expand the ranks of African priests, or even create what Graffin termed "secular apostles" to lead lay organizations for charity and outreach. Eliminating "adultery, paganism, gambling, bride price, laziness, non-spousal cohabitation, polygamy" and other deeply sinful habits required the support of new allies.⁷³ It also demanded that Africans demonstrate more submission to the demands of the Church. At the 1954 conference, Graffin suggested that bishops and parish priests require new demonstrations of allegiance from their congregants, including public pledges to stay true to their faith, renounce polygamy and bride price, and completely refute communism.⁷⁴ In addition, Catholic social work would be beholden to a new consequentialism that promoted the maximization of good. In deciding financial allocations, Graffin and his associates agreed to demand "evidence" of medical or social change, pedagogical improvement, psychological transformation, or the elimination of deficiency or delinquency. The Church would combat threats against the faith with verifications of its own progress.⁷⁵

At the 1957 BICE conference, invited scholars like Paul Verhaegen, a Belgian neurologist and psychologist based in Belgian Congo, discussed new methods of studying the psychology of the African child and the “social evolution” of the African adult.⁷⁶ The results of these technical experiments, argued Verhaegen and his supporters, could be used to measure the impact of Catholic social work in urban centers and rapidly industrializing zones in Africa. Verhaegen’s work, as well as that of other European social scientists such as Marcelle Geber, Jenny Aubry, and Jacques Lacan, was sponsored by the WHO for the purposes of better comprehending the relationships, hierarchies, psychological attachments, and standard behaviors of the African family, with particular emphasis on the mother-child relationship, the intellectual and social development of the African child in a rural milieu, and the transitions of African families and children in rapidly burgeoning urban milieus.⁷⁷

At the conference, European clergymen enthusiastically embraced the scientific discoveries and technical reports produced by psychologists, psychiatrists, and biologists about the intellectual capability, biological state, and moral nature of African children and the adults who cared for them. Special committees discussed the latest findings on the psychomotor development of the African child, which scientists attributed to the standard of maternal care, the psychological stability of the African mother, or the proletarian status of the African father.⁷⁸ Maternal stress, the “jealousies and rivalries” of the polygamous home, “obstructive” grandparents, or other family deficiencies could also have a direct impact on child intelligence, conference reports concluded.⁷⁹ Despite their disparaging assessments of African cultural and family life, BICE conference attendees also reached a sanguine conclusion: a solution was at hand. Ecclesiastical leaders and organizational directors extrapolated from scientific findings of intelligence scales, personality studies, and infant aptitude tests that there was no *genetic* difference between Africans and Europeans, only *social* distinctions, which could be overcome with greater educational and technical investments.⁸⁰ Africans were ultimately capable of “intelligence” per the tautology of European tests, and through cultural adaptation, they could enjoy the benefits of modernity. Citing the work of psychologist Henri Piéron, Verhaegen and others forwarded the theory of “cultural adaptation corresponding to a change of milieu” that would allow for an “authentic assimilation of [European] culture.”⁸¹ “Our notion of acculturation,” wrote Verhaegen, “presumes nothing about the existence or non-existence of irreducible genetic differences.”⁸²

In these results were the scientific substantiations for progressive and technically advanced humanitarian action in Africa. Local charity and compassionate work could indeed be useful, but it was not the deeply transformational liberation from sin and need that rectors like Graffin sought, and of which Africans were potentially capable. In partnering with social scientists working in Africa, the Catholic Church wished to dovetail charitable missions with medical and scientific investments that would not only improve stan-

dards of living, but also instill the moral disciplines of modernity among Africans: nuclear family building, educational advancement, and career placement. Adherence to behavioral codes, rather than spiritual expression, constituted the basis of Christian progress according to the dogmas of emergent partnerships between science and religion.

Consequences for African Catholic Social Work

The radical transformation of pre-existing charitable forms in Cameroon was most apparent in the process by which international agendas for the reform of health and welfare transitioned away from a longstanding approach of compassionate assistance for all who faced hardship to a new culture of maximizing results in the best interest of selected groups.⁸³ The 1957 conference presaged the departure of European support for indigenously managed charity grounded in mutual aid, confraternal organization, and rural and urban evangelism toward a new methodology for human progress based on scientific humanitarianism, development planning, and international coordination of technical experts for the benefit of “innocent” victims. In 1959, just before the majority of African colonies gained independence, the BICE actively participated in drafting the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, paying particular attention to the denigrating conditions experienced by children in Africa.⁸⁴ The suffering child, then, would not only come under the guardianship of the international order, but his condition implied that a revised trusteeship system in Africa should continue as a moral necessity.⁸⁵

With the collaboration of European Catholic leaders in Africa and Europe, the BICE sought to commandeer humanitarian implementation in emerging African nations.⁸⁶ Ironies abounded as part of this initiative, as European religious leaders accused Africans of lacking faith and hence of being unfit to lead a religious institution, while they themselves nonetheless used their own skepticism and scientism to legitimize their authority over the Church. Moreover, while decrying the rise of secularism and materialism in Africa, Catholic humanitarian agencies became enamored of projects that eschewed the phenomenological and the charismatic (the sharing of spiritual gifts) as well as the healing dimensions of community building and the development of religious solidarities, in favor of projects that glorified the empirical and created new logics that defined economic development as part of the “progress of Christianity” in the postcolonial age.⁸⁷

Mongo and his compatriots both witnessed and warned against the reconceptualization of charity into internationally coordinated professional philanthropy. In the last years of French rule in Cameroon, Mongo assumed the lead in the fight to retain control over indigenous Catholic humanitarian strategies that stood apart from the progressive and revisionist humanitarian vision offered by the European high clergy and their colleagues in the BICE as well as

in medicine and international governance. Mongo was convinced of Christianity's deep roots in the episteme and ethnopractice of Cameroon's societies, and, as a result, believed strongly in the impact of "intimate charity."⁸⁸ In a plenary lecture at the 1957 conference and in a later report, Bishop Mongo emphasized his people's longstanding tradition of charity and social action—what he termed "human centered renovations"—which were not motivated by ideological presuppositions, but rather intimate understandings of social turmoil. For nearly a century, African catechists had organized Christian followers and in attending to their concerns, shaped perceptions of who was deserving of sympathy, compassion, and assistance. For these communities, the child was neither the principal victim, nor the bedrock of futurist imaginings for society and state in Africa. As Mongo informed the 1957 conference attendees, "the child is the *raison d'être* of the household ... but the Universal Church promotes human persons and human societies, molding disciples and developing all whom it touches."⁸⁹ Mongo portended that misplaced notions of Christian love that excluded African adults "subject to passions and crimes like all other humans" and focused exclusively on economic development in the name of the evolution of the child had an "air of condescension" that would "risk arousing suspicion and turning the hearts" of African Christians away from their agenda.⁹⁰ Moreover, Bishop Mongo emphasized that a "qualified African laity" had already built a religious and moral infrastructure that made humanitarian gestures "more than an imported product ... or an agent of imperialism."⁹¹ What these local efforts had accomplished was "authentic progress," which was recognized as such by those they affected. Furthermore, by developing the impetus to remedy and assist as part of Christian morality, young African Christians recognized themselves as self-determining individuals as well as sustainers of righteous acts.⁹²

Mongo rejected science's validation of cultural prejudice, arguing that "technical competence is not sufficient" because it lacked a Christian conscience and a sense of responsibility. Moreover, "scientific proof" of the deleterious effects of African patriarchy, tribal structures, family arrangements, and the "general state of misery of the black race" assumed that at this moment "on suppose que nous partons de zéro" (you are assuming that we are starting from scratch). This supposition, he stated, would be quite prejudiced and even fatal for the cause of moral formation in Africa. "So no," said Mongo, "thank God, we are not starting from scratch."⁹³ For African priests and lay African Christian leaders, instructions regarding topics like nutrition, sexuality, communication, hygiene, and technical education appeared—in the words of the Congolese philosopher V.Y. Mudimbe—to be particular to one culture, but paradoxically claimed to be fundamental for all humanity.⁹⁴ Predating Bruno Latour's thesis by several years, Mongo perceived European science not as a technical procedure or objective set of principles, but rather, a culture.⁹⁵ And by having to interface with scientific "truth," which emphasized alterity and solidified binaries of civil and uncivil realms of human existence, Mongo foresaw the excommunication of Africans from the realm of modern Catholic social action.

Mongo eschewed consequentialist ethics because he believed that utilitarian ambitions often lacked a spiritual foundation. Mongo's deontological ethics sought not to maximize a particular definition of the good, but rather to "civilize and liberate ... in a climate of fraternal and non self-interested cooperation."⁹⁶ Although to be "civilized" had assumed a politically controversial inflection in the last years of French rule in Cameroon, Mongo determinedly employed the term to assure the Catholic faithful that he meant those with a "conscientious and active faith," which allowed them "to be more profoundly and authentically Cameroonian."⁹⁷ Rather than expressing apprehensive admonitions regarding national independence, Mongo associated the forthcoming nation-state of Cameroon as a sacred space of earned autonomy where Christian principles could be enshrined in law, and where colonial extraction and "self-interested philanthropy" would recede to make way for even more local Christian social movements.⁹⁸ Although arguably overly optimistic for the prospects of broad Catholic engagement in politics and society in postcolonial Cameroon, Mongo's November 1959 pastoral letter affirmed that the "competent, lucid, and responsible laity in Cameroon are called to assume total responsibility for the local Church."⁹⁹ With this rhetorical volley, Mongo demanded that both African Christians and foreign ecclesiastical leaders recognize the local spirit that animated charity on the ground, which had "a unifying role" and embodied "a concrete program of action ... that oriented responsibility toward the common good."¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

In a moment when Africans were considering the prospect of liberation from colonial rule, the development of new aid agendas by the international community does not seem surprising. New development paradigms and experts' recommendations inspired European Catholic leaders and prompted their renewed commitments to relief work.¹⁰¹ To many African religious leaders in Cameroon, however, new humanitarian agendas seemed utterly divorced from Christ's model of compassion. The indigenous charitable complex, which had served Cameroon for decades, embodied an arguably more "universal" vision of charity than that of the BICE. Decentralized African systems had consistent intentions—to better the lives of local unmarried men, widows, prostitutes, polygamists, lepers, alcoholics, the sick, unemployed youth, young mothers, victims of abuse, and others who suffered.¹⁰² Catholic charitable culture and public expressions of piety thrived in interwar as well as postwar Cameroon, even in dynamic experimental moments when discussions of Marxism, radical anticolonialism, and nationalism enlivened village meetings and youth group reunions.¹⁰³

Europeans' preponderant focus not only on technical sophistication, but also on the rights of the African child seems cynical in that it marginalized the

great majority of baptized believers on the continent. However, this cynicism served a useful purpose: justifying foreign ecclesiastical leaders' continued roles as "fathers" in Africa. Child welfare ideologies reoriented international agendas toward strategies rooted in empiricism and metrics that addressed the needs of "innocent" victims, rather than empowering those who had a stake in creating or moderating conditions in which people suffered. In the end, Thomas Mongo and his African colleagues recognized that a spiritually coherent African future based on local, nontechnical charitable and communitarian organizing for a diverse public was incompatible with the BICE's formulation of a global, transnational Catholic modernity.

In the decade following the Second World War, Cameroon was a shared cultural space in which differing concerns over the same problems emerged simultaneously. The records of the 1957 BICE Conference, as well as internal discussions within the Catholic Church and its foreign missions in the decade after World War II reveal the Janus face of a European clergy confronting modernity, which priests and missionaries defined simultaneously as a new epoch of possibility as well as a cataclysmic turning point. The modern public sphere with its competing ideas about truth and freedom, the market system with its unrelenting pressure to produce and consume, and ideas of citizenship, which compelled individuals to become part of the mechanics of the nation-state, were all deeply unsettling to the European Catholic clergy, who broadly attributed these phenomena to the unfixed experience of secularism. And yet, while thoroughly criticizing prevalent forms of both spiritual and political expression in Africa and claiming a need for the rescue of Christianity's mission on the continent, the European Catholic clergy and its lay partners in humanitarian organizing moved toward an analytical approach to charitable assistance unconstrained by religious doctrine. In doing this, they compromised the very basis of their moral authority and sabotaged any legitimacy they claimed as leaders of a universal brotherhood.

CHARLOTTE WALKER-SAID is an Assistant Professor of History in the Department of Africana Studies at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. She is completing a book manuscript on Christianity, human rights, and family law in French colonial Cameroon. Her research focuses on the French empire in Equatorial Africa, the history of Christianity in Africa, and the relationships between family law, religion, and human rights in Africa and across the Global South. She has taught African history and human rights at Harvard University, the University of Chicago, and Webster University. With John Kelly, she is the editor of the anthology, *Corporate Social Responsibility? Human Rights in the New Global Economy* (University of Chicago Press).

Notes

1. Fieldwork has been carried out mainly in coastal and southern Cameroon over seven years alongside archive work in Douala and Yaoundé, Cameroon, and in Paris, Aix-en-Provence, and Chevilly, France. This research has been funded by grants from the Fulbright IIE, the Social Science Research Council, the Bernadotte E. Schmitt Grant of the American Historical Association and the CUNY Research Foundation. Of particular importance to this article is the fieldwork conducted in June and October 2008 and May 2014, as well as archival work at the Archives nationales du Cameroun in Yaoundé, and the Archives de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit and the Bibliothèque du Défap-Service Protestant de Mission in France between 2006 and 2014. Earlier versions of this article were presented at the “Crisis in Humanitarianism/Humanitarianism in Crisis” conference organized by Mark Bradley and Samuel Moyn at the University of Chicago, on 25 and 26 April 2014 and at the “Humanitarianism and Changing Cultures of Cooperation” conference organized by Volker Heins and Christine Unrau at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research, Universität Duisburg-Essen, between June 5 and June 7, 2014. The article has also benefited from the critical insight of many colleagues, notably David Chandler, Emily Osborn, Ernest J. Miller, FSC, Philippe Azeufack, SJ, and Jean-Luc Enyegue, SJ.
2. Raoul Delgrange, “Discours d’ouverture de Monsieur Raoul Delgrange, Président du BICE,” in *Frères Universels... l’éducation du sens international chez l’enfant*, Actes du Ve congrès du Bureau international catholique de l’enfance, Venise, 2–8 May 1955 (Paris: Éditions Fleurus, 1957), 24–25.
3. Richard A. Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroon: Social Origins of the U.P.C. Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 316–20; Meredith Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence: Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State-Building in Cameroon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 126–33.
4. “Dans son message de Noël évoquant la situation troublée de son diocèse son Exc. Mgr Mongo supplie les siens d’être unis et zélés pour le bien,” *L’Effort Camerounais*, 5 January 1958; Isidore Tabi, “Cameroun terre mariale: Les sanctuaires et centres de pèlerinage marial du Cameroun,” Manuscrit en l’honneur et souvenir de l’arrivée de S.S. Jean Paul II au Cameroun (Ndonko, Cameroun, 1995), 11.
5. Cheah and Robbins define “cosmopolitics” as the emergence of structured ideologies about global consciousness. See Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
6. Pius XI, “Address to the Italian Catholic University Students’ Federation, FUCI,” 18 December 1927; See also Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Catholic Missions, 28 February 1926, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_28021926_rerum-ecclesiae.html.
7. Père François Coudreau, “Présentation de l’ouvrage,” in *Dix années de travail catéchétique dans le monde au service de la formation religieuse de l’enfant*, BICE Études et documents (Paris: Éditions Fleurus, 1960), 9–15; Monsignor Angelo Dell’Acqua, “Letter to the President of the BICE,” in *Frères Universels*, xiii – xiv. See also Darcie Fontaine, “Treason or Charity? Christian Missions on Trial and the Decolonization of Algeria,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44, 4 (2012): 733–53. For Pius XI’s original pronouncement, see Pius XI, “Address to the Italian Catholic University Students’ Federation, FUCI.”
8. René Finkelstein, “Save Children,” *The Child in the World* 1 (1955): 5–8. See also Lucia Ferretti and Louise Bienvenue, “Le Bureau international catholique de l’enfance: réseau et tribune pour les spécialistes québécois de l’enfance en difficulté

- (1947–1977),” *Revue d’histoire de l’enfance « irrégulière »*. *Le Temps de l’histoire* 12 (November 2010): 155–76.
9. Few sources exist on the relationship between the Catholic Church and the emerging national churches in Africa. Some good examples include Elizabeth A. Foster, “A Mission in Transition: Race, Politics, and the Decolonization of the Catholic Church in Senegal,” in *In God’s Empire: French Missionaries and the Modern World*, ed. Owen White and J. P. Daughton (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 257–77; Gérard Vieira, *L’Église catholique en Guinée à l’épreuve de Sekou Touré (1958–1984)* (Paris: Karthala, 2005); Joseph C. McKenna, *Finding a Social Voice: The Church and Marxism in Africa* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999). An excellent study on the Church in French Indochina at the end of empire is Charles Keith, *Catholic Vietnam: A Church from Empire to Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
 10. In his discussions of intimate charity, Mongo frequently cited Charles Journet, the Swiss theologian who wrote extensively on the themes of grace and charity as founding principles of the Church. See Charles Journet, *L’Église du verbe incarné: La hiérarchie apostolique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952).
 11. Much scholarship related to the expansion of faith-based charitable endeavors in Cameroon has been written by Cameroonians. See Roger Onomo Etaba, *Histoire de l’Église catholique du Cameroun de Grégoire XVI à Jean-Paul II* (Paris: Éditions de L’Harmattan, 2007), 86–94; Jean-Paul Messina, Owono Mimboé, and Bernardin Gantin, *Jean Zoa, Prêtre, Archevêque de Yaoundé: 1922–1998* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), 90–108; Grégoire Cador, *L’Héritage de Simon Mpeke: Prêtre de Jésus et frère universel* (Paris: Lethielleux, Desclée de Brouwer, 2009); Célestine Colette Fouellefak Kana Dongmo, “Le christianisme occidental à l’épreuve des valeurs religieuses africaines: le cas du catholicisme en pays Bamiléké au Cameroun (1906–1995)” (Thèse de doctorat, Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2005); Célestine Colette Fouellefak Kana Dongmo, “Acteurs locaux de l’implantation du catholicisme dans le pays Bamiléké au Cameroun,” *Chrétiens et sociétés: XVIIe-XXIe siècles* 13 (December 2006); Inyas Mbusao, *Actes des apôtres en pays Mafa: Les débuts de l’église catholique à Djingliya et à Koza (diocèse de Maroua-Mokolo, Cameroun)* (Maroua, Cameroun: Diocèse de Maroua, 2008).
 12. An exception to this is Paule Brasseur, “L’église catholique et la décolonisation en Afrique Noire,” in *Les Chemins de la décolonisation de l’Empire colonial français, 1936–1956: Colloque organisé les 4 et 5 octobre 1984*, ed. Charles-Robert Ageron (Paris: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1986), 55–68. Historians of humanitarianism in empire more generally include Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, 1st ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930*, 1st ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
 13. Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 1st ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 97–158; Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
 14. Keith David Watenpaugh, “The League of Nations’ Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927,” *American Historical Review* 115, 5 (2010), 1323; Giuliana Chamedes, “Pius XII, Rights Talk and the Dawn of the Religious Cold War,” in *Religion and Human Rights*, ed. David Penadas (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

15. For some notable scholarship on Catholicism in colonial Africa, see Elizabeth Foster, *Faith in Empire: Religion, Politics, and Colonial Rule in French Senegal, 1880–1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); J. J. Carney, *Rwanda Before the Genocide: Catholic Politics and Ethnic Discourse in the Late Colonial Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Etaba, *Histoire de l'Église catholique du Cameroun*.
16. Coudreau, "Présentation de l'Ouvrage."
17. Mann, *From Empires to NGOs*.
18. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 66–102.
19. Several historians and anthropologists of Cameroon have noted the evolution of religious social assistance beginning in the late nineteenth century with the arrival of foreign missionary societies to the territory, including Philippe Laburthe-Tolra, *Vers la lumière? ou, le désir d'Ariel: À propos des Beti du Cameroun: Sociologie de la conversion* (Paris: Karthala, 1999); Antoine Ondoa Dzou, "Christianisation des Beti du centre Cameroun 1922–1955: essai d'interprétation" (Thèse d'université, Lyon III, 1994); Lucien Anya-Noa, *Pierre Mebe: Hymne à l'hospitalité Beti* (Yaoundé, Cameroon: Abba Ekan/Centre culturel beti, 2003); Isidore Tabi, *La Théologie des rites beti: Essai d'explication religieuse des rites beti et ses implications socio-culturelles* (Yaoundé, Cameroon: Éditions St. Paul, 1991); Louis-Paul Ngongo, *Histoire des forces religieuses au Cameroun* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1982); Jean Criaud, *La Geste des spiritains: Histoire de l'Église au Cameroun 1916–1990* (Yaoundé: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1990); Goustan Le Bayon, *Les Prêtres du Sacré-Cœur et la naissance de l'Église au Cameroun: Kumbo, Foumban, Nkongsamba, Bafoussam* (Yaoundé, Cameroon: Procure des Missions S.C.J., 1986).
20. Louis-Paul Aujoulat, "Les Problèmes sociaux de l'Afrique Noire," *Chronique sociale de France* 4, 4 (1947), 416. Direction Diocésaine des œuvres, Yaoundé, "Les prêtres de l'Archidiocèse de Yaoundé s'interrogent," 1959, Archives de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit (henceforth ACSSp.), Chevilly Larue, France 2J1.7a7.
21. François Pichon, "Les causes de la crise de natalité au Cameroun," *Marchés coloniaux du monde* V, 176 (1949): 567–68; François Pichon, "L'effrayant dépeuplement de l'AEF, du Cameroun et d'une manière générale de l'Afrique Noire," *Marchés coloniaux du monde* IV, 164 (1948): 2347–48.
22. "Vrai ou fausse indépendance? Lettre des évêques du Cameroun," *Cameroun Catholique*, 2 April 1955.
23. BICE, *L'Enfant africain: L'éducation de l'enfant africain en fonction de son milieu de base et de son orientation d'avenir*, Études et Documents (Paris: Éditions Fleurus, 1960).
24. Rev. Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre, cited in "Déroulement des travaux de la Conférence, 1ère journée: mercredi 2 janvier 1957," in *L'Enfant africain*, 24–25; and Dell'Acqua, "Letter to the President of the BICE."
25. Cardinal Pironio, "Message for the Fortieth Anniversary of the ICCB," *Children Worldwide: International Catholic Child Bureau* 15, 2 (1988): 1–2; Olivier de Labarthe, "Au service de l'enfant: le BICE hier, aujourd'hui, et demain" (Paris: Bureau international catholique de l'enfance, 1988).
26. Jean-Marie Mayeur, *Catholicisme social et démocratie chrétienne: Principes romains, expériences françaises* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1986); Paul Droulers, *Politique sociale et christianisme: Le père Desbuquois et l'Action populaire* (Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1969).
27. Finkelstein, "Save Children."
28. "La formation des éducateurs spécialisés: conception-type d'une école d'éducatrices spécialisées pour l'enfance inadaptée," *L'Enfance dans le monde* 3, 7 (September 1955): 28–30. See also Jeannine Guindon, "La formation des maîtres et éducateurs pour les exceptionnels," *L'Enfant exceptionnel* 3, 4 (juin 1967): 25–29; Marc Leca-

- valier, "Techniques d'éducation spécialisée," *L'Enfant exceptionnel* 9, 1 (March 1973): 1-2.
29. Catherine Rollet, "La santé et la protection de l'enfant vues à travers les congrès internationaux (1880-1920)," *Annales de démographie historique* 1, 101 (2001): 97-116. BICE International Congresses were held in Holland in 1949, Madrid in 1951, Konstanz in 1953, Venice in 1955, Montreal in 1957, and Lisbon in 1959. See BICE, *Dix années de travail catéchétique dans le monde*, 10-11.
 30. Social science was enormously influential in the postwar period as a result of publications such as John Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health: A Report Prepared on Behalf of the World Health Organization as a Contribution to the United Nations Programme for the Welfare of Homeless Children* (Geneva: World Health Organization, United Nations, 1952). Important historical analyses of the effects of this literature include Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Pierre-Yves Saunier, "Les régimes circulatoires du domaine social 1800-1940: projets et ingénierie de la convergence et de la différence," *Genèses* 2, 71 (2008): 4-25.
 31. Coudreau, "Présentation de l'ouvrage," 10.
 32. ICCB, "Serving Children, ICCB's Past, Present, and Future," *Children Worldwide: International Catholic Child Bureau* 15, 2 (1988), 2.
 33. Delgrange, "Discours d'ouverture de Monsieur Raoul Delgrange," 23.
 34. Dell'Acqua, "Letter to the President of the BICE."
 35. Marie-Dominique Chenu, André de Bovis, and Henri Rondet, *L'Enfant et son avenir professionnel: Esquisse d'une théologie de la création et du travail*, BICE Études et Documents (Paris: Éditions Fleurus, 1959), 43.
 36. BICE affiliate Odile Roulet cited the "dangerous, hungry, destroyed world" as the rallying cry for the mobilization of international Catholic forces to accomplish "the work of mercy in modern times." Father René Finkelstein, BICE chaplain, described the paternal responsibility as "an international sense of the child as a universal duty." See Odile Roulet, *Des enfants ont faim...!*, BICE Collection Le Monde et l'Enfant (Paris: Éditions Fleurus, 1961), 73; René Finkelstein, "Préface," in *Frères Universels...*, v-vi.
 37. BICE, *L'Enfant Africain*, 31-106.
 38. Docteur Henri Ouellet, "Les fondements psychologiques de l'éducation du sens international chez l'enfant," in *Frères Universels...*, 68-87.
 39. "Événements, Catéchistes, Pichon," Archives nationales du Cameroun (hereafter ANC), Affaires politiques et administratives (hereafter APA), 10560/A; See also Jean-René Brutsch, "A Glance at Missions in Cameroon," *International Review of Missions* 39, 155 (July 1950): 302-10; Ngongo, *Histoire des forces religieuses au Cameroun*.
 40. Journal de la Mission de Nlong, 1925-1938, ACSSp. 2J2.1a.
 41. Catechumens were those who were receiving instruction in Christianity but had not yet been baptized. Catechumens were both young and old and not necessarily new to the faith. In some cases in Cameroon, devout men who attended mass and professed strong faith remained catechumens their entire lives, rather than becoming baptized Catholics, because they refused to renounce polygamy. Postulants were those who had expressed a commitment to devoting themselves to ecclesiastical life by entering a seminary or convent and intended to receive holy orders.
 42. Journal de la Mission de Nlong, 1925-1938, ACSSp. 2J2. 1a.
 43. Ibid.
 44. Ekoan Maria, Confrérie de l'adoration réparatrice, Association de Saint Joseph, ACSSp. 2J2.1a. See also Aloyse Kisito Patrice Essono, *L'Annonce de l'Évangile au Cameroun: L'œuvre missionnaire des Pallottins de 1890 à 1916 et de 1964 à 2010* (Paris:

- Karthala, 2013), 214–15; Messina and Slageren, *Histoire du christianisme au Cameroun*, 178–80.
45. Essono, *L'Annonce de l'Évangile au Cameroun*, 130; Jean Criaud, "Étienne Nkodo: le premier spiritain camerounais," *Mémoire Spiritaine* 8, deuxième semestre (1998): 50–73.
 46. Département de Mbam, ACSSp. 2J1.6.2; Record of 5 September 1931, Vogt, Doumé, ACSSp. 2J1.1a.10; "Journal de la mission catholique de Bikop, 1–2 mai 1941," ACSSp. 2J2 1A; Père Eugène Keller (1884–1955), ACSSp. AF 6. See also Criaud, "Étienne Nkodo."
 47. Ekoan Maria, ACSSp. 2J1.7b4. See also Cadot, *L'Héritage de Simon Mpeke*; Sœur Gertude Thérèse Kibéné Ngo Billong, *Noces de grâce de la Congrégation des sœurs servantes de Marie de Douala: 70 ans d'existence* (Douala: Congrégation des sœurs servantes de Marie de Douala, 2009), 5.
 48. Cameroun Catholique 1939, ACSSp. 2J1.8b2. See also Charlotte Walker-Said, "Wealth and Moral Authority: Marriage and Christian Mobilization in Interwar Cameroon," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 48, 3 (2015): 183–201.
 49. "Notre premier évêque titulaire africain, S. Exec. Mgr. Thomas Mongo, évêque de Douala," 1958, ACSSp. 2J1.9b3; Grace Ongey, "Douala Archdiocese Pays Homage to Mgr. Thomas Mongo," *L'Effort camerounais*, 14 March 2011; "Thomas Mongo, à Douala, parle avec *La Croix*," *La Croix*, 14 May 1958; S. Exc. Mgr Thomas Mongo, "L'enfance d'aujourd'hui et l'Église de demain en Afrique," in *L'Enfant africain*, 369–78.
 50. "Léproserie Saint Michel de Nden, Projet d'organisation et de fonctionnement," ACSSp. 2J1.7b4.
 51. "Solidarité entre les lépreux," August 1959, ACSSp. 2J1.6.2.
 52. "Informations catholiques," ACSSp. 2J1.13b1.
 53. These confessional movements had their origins in Belgium and northern France, but found especially fertile ground in Cameroon. ANC APA 1135/A Missions Catholiques, Divers, 1947–1951, Action Catholique: Bonneau. See also Roger Pasquier, *La Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne en Afrique noire (1930–1950)* (Paris: Karthala, 2013); Gérard Cholvy, Bernard Comte, and Vincent Féroldi, *Jeunesses chrétiennes au XXe siècle* (Paris: Les Éditions ouvrières, 1991).
 54. BICE, *L'Enfant africain*, 98–106.
 55. The Archdiocese of Yaoundé counted nearly seven hundred thousand Catholics and three hundred thousand Protestants in the territory in 1957. Vicaires apostoliques du Cameroun, "Le catholicisme au Cameroun," *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, 15 March 1957, 44th edition.
 56. André Soucadaux and Louis-Paul Aujoulat, *Cameroun: Les documents de France* (Paris: Alépée et Cie., 1950), 18. See also Noddings, Réunion des Ordinaires du Cameroun, 1956, ACSSp. 2J1.6.3
 57. André Retif, "Le Cameroun sera-t-il chrétien?" *La Croix*, 9 December 1954; Paule Brasseur, "La perception du christianisme par les administrateurs français en Afrique Noire au lendemain de la Seconde Guerre mondiale," in *Diffusion et acculturation du christianisme (XIXe-XXe siècles): Vingt-cinq ans de recherches missiologiques par le CREDIC*, ed. Jean Comby (Paris: Karthala, 2005), 279–87. The public address of the European Catholic bishops to the Cameroonian populace of 10 April 1955 unequivocally declared UPC sympathies to be incompatible with Catholicism. See, among others Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroon*; Achille Mbembe, *La Naissance du maquis dans le sud-Cameroun, 1920–1960: Histoire des usages de la raison en colonie* (Paris: Karthala, 1996).
 58. See among others Henri Dubois, "La pénétration du christianisme parmi les femmes païennes," *Les Missions Catholiques (Lyon)*, 1933.

59. Abbé Jean Noddings, chanoine de l'Action catholique au Cameroun, "Témoignage de l'Action catholique d'Outre Mer," 1955, ACSSp. 2J1.7b4; Aujoulat, "Les problèmes sociaux de l'Afrique Noire."
60. R.P. Joseph Roger de Benoist, "L'Hebdomadaire catholique Dakarais, *Afrique nouvelle*, et la décolonisation de l'A.O.F.," in *Les Chemins de la décolonisation*, 531–40.
61. Aujoulat, "Les problèmes sociaux de l'Afrique Noire"; "Vrai ou fausse indépendance? Lettre des évêques du Cameroun."
62. The Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide operated throughout the period of imperial rule in Africa as the congregation of the Roman Curia responsible for international missionary activity. The apostolic vicars of the French-administered territory of Cameroon reported to the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide until 14 September 1955 when the Holy See created eleven new ecclesiastic provinces in French Africa, which would operate as full and independent dioceses. Ngongo, *Histoire des forces religieuses au Cameroun*, 225.
63. As three of the French bishops of Cameroon in 1955 were Spiritains (Mgrs. René Graffin, Pierre Bonneau, and Jacques Teerenstra), the Congregation of the Holy Ghost had considerable influence and communication with the Propaganda Fide in Rome. See Henry J. Koren, *Les Spiritains: Trois siècles d'histoire religieuse et missionnaire; histoire de la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1982).
64. Jean Paul Messina and Jaap Van Slageren, *Histoire du christianisme au Cameroun: Des origines à nos jours; approche œcuménique* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2005), 182; "Le sacre de Monseigneur Mongo Thomas," *Liberté* 2, 13 (March 1956), 2; Lettres de Graffin, Yaoundé, 1952, ACSSp. 2J1.13.b3; Père Henri Neyrand à Père Murphy, 9 March 1957, ACSSp. 2J1.9.a3; Documents de la Procure générale, la Congrégation du Saint-Esprit, 3 March 1957, ACSSp. 2J1.9.a3; Père Henri Neyrand au Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, Préfet de la Propagande, Rome, 10 March 1957, ACSSp. 2J1.9.a3.
65. Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones*, Encyclical on Promotion of Catholic Missions, 2 June 1951. See also Philippe Levillain, *Dictionnaire Historique de La Papauté* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 1370; Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, Encyclical letter on rights and duties of capital and labor, 15 May 1891; See also R.P. Bouchaud, "Cameroun: église et communisme," *Spiritains: Missions des Pères Du St. Esprit* 31, 1 (March 1958); Jean-François Bayart, "Les rapports entre les églises et l'État du Cameroun de 1958 à 1971," *Revue française d'études politiques africaines* 80 (1972): 79–104.
66. Jacques Guilbot, "Les conditions de vie des indigènes de Douala," *Études Camerounaises* 27–28 (December 1949): 179–239; Pichon, "L'effrayant dépeuplement de l'AEF"; Pichon, "Les causes de la crise de natalité au Cameroun"; Sœur Marie-André du Sacré Coeur, *La Condition humaine en Afrique Noire* (Paris: Grasset, 1952); Georges Balandier, "Problèmes politiques et économiques au niveau du village fang," *B.I.E.C.* 1 (1950): 49–64.
67. Direction diocésaine des œuvres, Yaoundé, "Les prêtres de l'archidiocèse de Yaoundé s'interrogent," 1959, ACSSp. 2J1.7a7; Graffin lettres, 1952, ACSSp. 2J1.13.b3.
68. Direction diocésaine des œuvres, 1959, ACSSp. 2J1.7a7.
69. Monsignor Angelo Dell'Acqua, "La conférence internationale d'études du BICE sur l'enfant africain: Yaoundé 2-7 1957," in *L'Enfant africain*, 14.
70. Réunion des Ordinaires du Cameroun à Yaoundé, 1949, 1956, ACSSp. 2J1.6.3.
71. Réunion des Ordinaires du Cameroun à Yaoundé, 20-21-22 mars 1956, ACSSp. 2J1.6.3.
72. Thomas Mongo, contributor, BICE, *L'Enfant africain*, 91–94. Quoting Joseph Wilbois, *Le Service social dans les colonies françaises d'Afrique Noire* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Union Missionnaire du Clergé, 1947).
73. Direction diocésaine des œuvres, Yaoundé, "Les prêtres de l'archidiocèse de Yaoundé s'interrogent."

74. Séance plénière, Réunion des Ordinaires de missions du Cameroun français, Yaoundé 30 May–4 June 1949, ACSSp. 2J1.6.3.
75. “Yaoundé: conférence internationale catholique sur l’enfant africain,” *La Croix*, 11 January 1957.
76. BICE, *L’Enfant africain*, 415–17.
77. Marcelle Geber, “L’environnement et le développement des enfants africains,” *Enfance* 26, 3–4 (1973): 145–74; Marcelle Geber, “The State of Development of Newborn Children in Africa,” *The Lancet* 270, 6987 (1957): 189–90; Paul Verhaegen and J.L. Laroche, “Biologie et études sociales,” *Église Vivante* 8 (1956): 36–44; Paul Verhaegen, “Psychological Testing in Africa,” *International Review of Applied Psychology* 22, 1 (1973): 85–97. Geber’s work was in conversation with Louis Berlioz and Paul Vouilloux. See Louis Berlioz, “Étude des ‘progressive matrices’ faite sur les Africains de Douala,” *Bulletin du centre d’études et recherches psychotechniques* 4 (1955): 33–44; P.D. Vouilloux, “Étude de la psychomotricité d’enfants africains au Cameroun: Test de Gesell et réflexes archaïques,” *Journal de la société des africanistes* 29, 1 (1959): 11–18.
78. Geber, “The State of Development of Newborn Children in Africa.”
79. Paul Verhaegen, “Contribution à l’étude de la psychologie de l’enfant africain,” in *L’Enfant africain*.
80. BICE, *L’Enfant africain*, 187–249. See also Paul Etoga, “Il n’y a pas de race supérieure,” *Écho des missions* 2 (March 1956), À propos du sacre de Monseigneur Paul Etoga.
81. BICE, *L’Enfant africain*, 321–40.
82. Verhaegen and Laroche, “Biologie et études sociales.”
83. ICCB, “The Foundation of the ICCB,” *Children Worldwide: International Catholic Child Bureau* 15, 2 (1988), 3. The United Nations employed precisely the same vocabularies regarding children, see Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations* (New York: United Nations, 1956).
84. Alessandra Aula et al., *BICE, a Worldwide Network of Organizations at the Service of Children* (Paris: BICE, 2009).
85. BICE, ed., *L’Enfant dans l’Église et le monde aujourd’hui* (Paris: Éditions Fleurus, 1960), 66–70.
86. Michael Freeman and Philip Veerman, *The Ideologies of Children’s Rights* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992), 90–103; Camille Seccaud, “La conception de l’enfance en droit international: illustration par les enfants travailleurs,” *Revue québécoise de droit international* 24, 1 (2011): 131–70.
87. This perspective is particularly apparent in Chenu, de Bovis, and Rondet, *L’Enfant et son avenir professionnel*, 20–44.
88. See Journet, *L’Église du verbe incarné*, 492–99.
89. BICE, *L’Enfant africain*, 175–78.
90. Mongo, “L’enfance d’aujourd’hui et l’Église de demain en Afrique.”
91. *Ibid.*
92. Charles Ngande and Georges Ngango, *Bâtir la Cité*, Editeur l’Effort Camerounais (Yaoundé: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1958), 3.
93. BICE, *L’Enfant africain*, 179–80.
94. Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *L’Autre face du Royaume* (Lausanne: Éditions de l’Âge d’homme, 1973), 35.
95. Jacques Lacan, “La science et la vérité,” *Cahiers pour l’analyse* 1, 1 (1966): 7–28.
96. “Thomas Mongo, à Douala, parle avec *La Croix*.”
97. S. Exc. Mgr Thomas Mongo, “Lettre pastorale de Son Excellence Mgr. Thomas Mongo sur l’avenir du pays,” *L’Effort Camerounais*, 15 November 1959.
98. *Ibid.*; “Thomas Mongo, à Douala, parle avec *La Croix*.”

99. Mongo, "Lettre pastorale."
100. Ibid.
101. Stephen Legg, "'The Life of Individuals as Well as of Nations': International Law and the League of Nations' Anti-Trafficking Governmentalities," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 25, 3 (2012): 647–64.
102. Jean-Baptiste Yonke, "Alcoolisme - Danger," *L'Effort camerounais* 94 (July 1957).
103. Ebolowa, Église Ste Anne d'Ebolowa, ACSSp. 2J1.7a7; Engelbert Mveng, *Album du centenaire: 1890–1990; L'Église catholique au Cameroun, 100 ans d'évangélisation* (Yaoundé: Conférence épiscopale nationale du Cameroun, 1990), 83. See also François Pichon, "Un vent de Pentecôte," *Pentecôte Sur Le Monde*, 1952, ACSSp. 2J1.5b6, Les missions catholiques au Cameroun, 1951–1952.