

**Letter to Fr. Charmetant, Superior at
Ouahgias - Living poor (23rd January 1874)**

My dear child,

I am sending Father Soboul to Tagmount-Azouz where he will soon become Superior after the departure of Father Prudhomme whom I shall recall near the first of February.

I still cannot understand how the house where you are spends more than the others that are content with what I give them. Indeed, I give them, as well as to you, more than any diocesan priest, in proportion. Your Rule is to live like the local people and the Mission will soon collapse if you do not do so. Now what local person spends twelve hundred francs a year, without counting clothing and travel? Naturally, there are none. I am saddened, my dear child, to see that you, who are one of our seniors, are pushing in a similar path and give a very destructive example. You are thus working to destroy the Work very soon. Indeed, it can only survive through poverty and assimilation with the local population in food and materials.

I am pleased that the applications from the local people are multiplying. You need to welcome them in principle and decide to act towards the spring. For the purchase of plots of land, have a good look by yourself and another Father you will take with you. Then, send me proper proposals. I cannot decide with words up in the air. Go and see the things on the spot and deal with the business completely before referring it to me.

I am happy to learn from you that you are not making any imprudent propaganda; keep it up. I even think we could introduce ourselves as marabout-doctors and not seek out children for schooling. We could open schools later and very unassumingly.

**New Instructions for the Fathers of the second
caravan to Equatorial Africa (January 1879)**

Livingstone recommends always being 'pleasant' towards the local populations through which you pass. On this subject, he quotes this Arab proverb:

'Whoever travels using a polite and wholesome language among the worst peoples of Africa has nothing to fear.' The implementation of this advice is all the easier for Missionaries as it is the expression of evangelical charity that should be in the depths of their hearts for the African peoples. Therefore, they should always avoid being the first to show them hostile attitudes. They will also instil the same approach into the Pontifical Zouaves accompanying them. They must regard it as an abominable crime to initiate hostilities against a tribe, and they must not allow themselves to be defended by open force until there is a clear danger to their lives. Livingstone comments that a European can easily be mistaken about the attitudes of the local inhabitants and mistake what is only a noisy and curious attitude for hostility. They should remember that in acting otherwise, they are preparing reprisals that would probably make the Mission impossible. M. Debaise attacked a tribe in Ugogo and caused the massacre of the English caravan that followed him and perhaps created new problems for travellers who would come after him.

In addition to not attacking, you must not give in to reckless dependence. M. Maizan, a French past pupil of the Ecole Polytechnique, was treacherously murdered after terrible torture by an African chief for having recklessly put himself into his power. In addition, you should not have a fruitless accommodating attitude towards the Africans, even out of charity. Burton claims that you should not even bow or bend before them to lift something, or risk losing prestige.

