

About Ikom...

A letter from M. John Bosco concerning the newest Holy Child Mission in Africa

This is being written at the end of my "leave" — on the day before I fly back to Nigeria, to our new mission in Ikom. Actually, I had only a few hours in Ikom just before I left for the U.S. but it made such an impression on me that I'm eager to get back and "in stride."

The town of Ikom has a beautiful location; it is on the bank of the Cross River and is surrounded by hills as you can see in the photo. Our mission is about eighty miles from the Ogoja mission, which lies to the north, and the same distance from Abakaliki to the west. Our little community of *two* really belongs to the Afikpo community, a hundred and thirty miles away, so Reverend Mother M. Hubert has a long journey to make each time she comes up.

You remember the location of the Holy Child Convent School (primary) which was begun in the 1930's? Our new secondary school is just behind it. Before the Convent school was opened, some of the Ikom people sent their daughters down the Cross River to our school in Calabar and it is these Calabar Old Girls who petitioned Bishop McGettrick, S.P.S. to open a secondary school in Ikom.

The Bishop erected the present buildings with offerings he received in America on visits there during the Council recesses, and Father Thomas Loughlin, S.P.S., the parish priest, has supervised all the work of construction. Father went to endless trouble to have the compound ready for the Inspector who, according to the new regulations, must

approve everything before classes may begin.

The Medical Missionaries of Mary, just across from us on the next hill, have been kindness itself to Mother M. St. Henry and Mother M. Patrick who went up last January to begin the school. Without the help of these wonderful Sisters and that of the St. Patricks' Fathers it would have been impossible for us to make the new foundation.

I've lost track of how many mis-

sions Mother St. Henry has helped to found; she is a real pioneer, but now she is in England for a much-needed rest.

The school will be only single stream so we started with thirty boarders. As Form I students (the equivalent of ninth grade in the U.S.A.), they will do English, French, Science, Maths, History, Geography, Religion, etc.

I might just mention that we feel a special bond with our other 1967

Pioneering a new mission...

Rev. M. M. Hubert and M. St. Henry have had long experience in Africa. Rev. M. M. Hubert, Superior in Afikpo, now has to make a 130 mile trip to visit her "daughter" mission.



THE PYLON

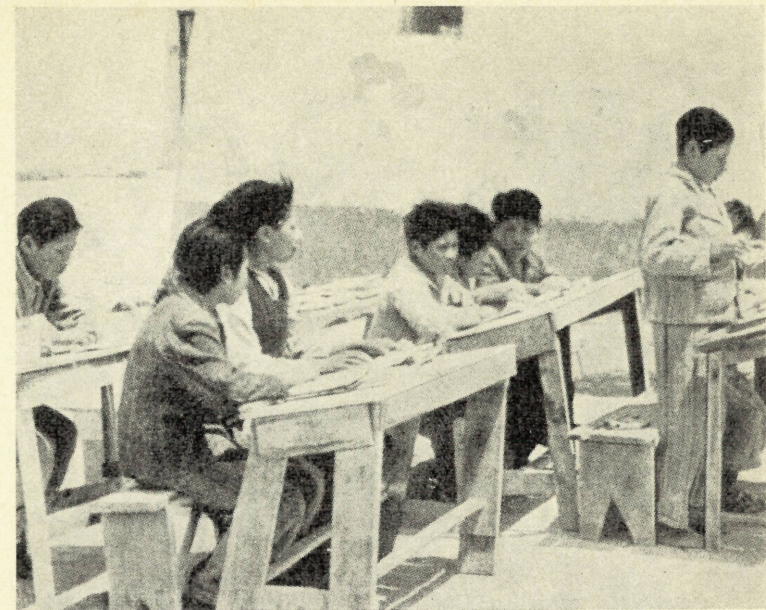
foundation which will be made in Chile toward the end of the year. It is interesting to note that in both cases we are on a river and surrounded by hills — though the Andes would make our hills look dwarfed! We hope that our Nigerian schools will be able to help the new South American foundation in some way, at least by prayers and small sacrifices. The African children are more conscious than ever of the Church's needs in other parts of the world and want to help the Church in other countries — even though there is still a tremendous amount to be done in Nigeria. *In a population of about fifty-six million people, only some four-and-a-half million are Christian.*

When I am back in Ikom I will write you again. Meanwhile, please keep us in your prayers.



In front of St. Peter's in Rome on her way back to Nigeria . . . M. John Bosco, who wrote this letter, and M. M. Patrick (see cover) now are a 'community of two' at Ikom.

Rev. M. Gabriel Dolores, Ogoja, (right) and M. M. Liam, Lagos, visit Ikom. The school building in back is nearing completion.



(Courtesy of the Chilean Embassy, Rome)

A mountain school classroom near Lo Barnechea. Could you think of improvements?

New Missions Need Four Pillars

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| Pillar 1. Heartfelt Prayer | Pillar 4. Generous support from those unable to go on the missions themselves. |
| Pillar 2. Religious Personnel | |
| Pillar 3. Qualified lay helpers | |

The new Holy Child projects - in CHILE and in IKOM (Nigeria) are an ocean apart . . . but only as far away, really, as your pen and paper. Which pillar will YOU choose?

"I look out from our hilltop," says one missionary, "and I don't see the trees or the houses or the river . . . I see souls, thousands of them, so pitifully in need of help, and I am only one . . ."