

DON BOSCO'S MISSIONARY DREAMS—IMAGES OF A WORLDWIDE SALESIAN APOSTOLATE

Prefatory Note¹

Because of the vastness of the subject and of the amount of material involved, this essay will be presented in two installments. In this issue, after a general introduction, we will discuss the First Missionary Dream, expressing Don Bosco's original option for the missions; and then, the two "South American" missionary dreams, projecting the expansion of the Salesian work in that sub-continent. In the next issue we will present the two world-oriented dreams, and we will conclude with an interpretation of the missionary dreams as a whole, as well as of particular facets thereof.

Introduction

The *Biographical Memoirs* and the *Documenti* that preceded them record over 150 narratives of dreams attributed to Don Bosco.² Many of them are

¹ The present study is a rewritten version of two earlier essays by the same author: "I Sogni in Don Bosco. Esame storico-critico, significato e ruolo profetico missionario per l'America Latina," in *Don Bosco e Brasilia. Profezia, realtà sociale e diritto*, a cura di Cosimo Semeraro. Padova: CEDAM, 1990, p. 85-130; and "Don Bosco's Mission Dreams in Context," *Indian Missiological Review* 10 (1988) 9-52. In spite of basic identity with the earlier drafts, it was felt that in its present form the essay will interest the readers of the *Journal*.

² The Italian *Memorie Biografiche* are cited as *IBM*. The English *Biographical Memoirs* (volumes I-XV) are cited as *EBM*.

[Giovanni Battista Lemoyne] *Documenti per scrivere la storia di D. Giovanni Bosco, dell'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales e della Congregazione Salesiana*, 45 volumes [probably, San Benigno Canavese (Torino): Scuola Grafica Salesiana, 1885-] in the *Archivio Salesiano Centrale* 110: Cronachette, Lemoyne-Doc. *Fondo Don Bosco Microfiches* 966-1201 — cited as *Documenti*.

transcribed or edited from first-hand reports now preserved the *Central Salesian Archives*.³ The *Biographical Memoirs* in their turn have served as the source for published single or collected dream texts.⁴ Critical studies on Don Bosco's dreams also have appeared in recent years.⁵

Among these reported dreams of Don Bosco, there are five which traditionally carry the label of "missionary dreams." The description is appropriate, for these five (more clearly than other dreams and specifically) image the future expansion of the Salesian work from its original homeland to the "foreign missions"—first to Patagonia, then to Latin America, and finally to the whole world.

The five dream narratives in question, familiar to all from the *Biographical Memoirs* and the collections, are: (1) the Dream of the (Patagonian) Missions (1871/72); (2) the Dream of the Train Journey on the (South American) Missions (August 30, 1883); (3) the Dream of the Fantastic Highways and the Hall of Glory on the (South American) missions (January 31,

³ *Archivio Salesiano Centrale*, Via della Pisana 1111, Roma — cited as ASC. The Don Bosco files (*Fondo Don Bosco*) of the ASC are available in microfiches — cited as FDBM.

⁴ Eugenio Ceria, *Annali della Società Salesiana*, [Vol. I:] *Dalle origini alla morte di S. Giovanni Bosco (1841-1888)*. Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1841, pp. 245-247, 423-434, 505-510, 551-559 — cited as *Annali I*.

The better-known collections are the following: F. Villanueva and R. Fierro, *Los sueños de Don Bosco*. Madrid, SEI, 1952. E. Pilla, *I sogni di Don Bosco nella cornice della sua vita*, 3rd ed. Siena: Cantagalli, 1979 (summaries in a biographical context). P. Zerbino, *I sogni di Don Bosco*. Leumann (Torino): LDC, 1987. E. M. Brown, *Dreams, Visions & Prophecies of Don Bosco*. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Don Bosco Publications, 1988.

A critical edition of ten narratives of "prophecies" and dreams from archival manuscripts [ASC 132 Autografi-Sogni, FDBM 1346f.] was published by C. Romero, *I sogni di Don Bosco*, edizione critica. Leumann (Torino): LDC, 1978 — cited as Romero, *Sogni*.]

⁵ P. Stella, *Don Bosco nella storia della religiosità cattolica*. Roma: LAS, vol. II (2nd ed.): *Mentalità religiosa e spiritualità* (1981), pp. 507-569 (Appendix: "Note per uno studio sui sogni di Don Bosco") — cited as Stella, *Don Bosco II*.

F. Desramaut, *Les Mémoires I de G.B. Lemoyne. Étude d'un ouvrage fondamental sur la jeunesse de Saint Jean Bosco*. Lyon: Maison d'Études Saint-Jean-Bosco, 1862, pp. 250-258 (source-critical study of the vocation dream narratives) — cited as Desramaut, *Mémoires I*.

Id., "Études préalables à une biographie de saint Jean Bosco. VIII: La vieillesse (1884-1888)," in *Cahiers Salesiens* [...], No. 18-19, Avril-Octobre 1988, p. 98-113 — cited as Desramaut, *Études VIII (Cahiers)*.

A. Lenti, "Don Bosco's Vocation-Mission Dream—Its Recurrence and Significance," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 2 (1991) 45-156; besides the essays cited in note 1 above.

C. Semeraro, "I sogni di Don Bosco. Saggio di storiografia," in *Don Bosco e Brasilia*, cit., p. 21-46.

1885); (4) the Dream of the Angels of the Missions (narrated on July 2, 1885); (5) the Barcelona Dream, or Dream of the Mission Line Santiago-Africa-Peking" (April 9, 1886)—the last two having a worldwide scope.

It should immediately be noted that these dreams view the foreign missions not as an added Salesian work, but as the worldwide orientation of the typical evangelizing and educative Salesian apostolate. In this respect, they are neither isolated nor unique. First, they stand in continuity with Don Bosco's original vocation dream and its variants, and (in parallel fashion) they address the Salesian society in its vocation-mission. Secondly, they are only select instances of a larger category of dreams that deal with the future of the Salesian Society and its mission, as envisaged by the Founder.

Hence, it is the aim of the present essay not only to study the missionary dreams as witnesses of Don Bosco's missionary awareness and commitment in its historical development, but also as expressions of his developing conception of the Salesian Society's vocation and work.

Part One: Preliminary Questions on Don Bosco's Dreams in General and on the Missionary Dreams in Particular

I. Origin, Tradition and Redaction of the Dream Narratives

1. Dream Narratives in Relation to the Dream Experience

Obviously, the dream experience of any dreamer is accessible to others only through his or her "telling the dream." This operation results in a dream narrative. This is true also in Don Bosco's case. The question may be asked, What is the nature of the dream narratives in our possession with respect to their textual origins? This question refers to the degree of authentication by Don Bosco which a particular dream narrative may possess.

Considering, in the first place, only archival manuscripts, we may distinguish three general categories: (1) the few dream narratives wholly in Don Bosco's hand; (2) the small number of dream narratives in other hands, reviewed and corrected by Don Bosco;⁶ (3) the many first-hand reports by early Salesians

⁶ Cf. ASC 132: Autografi-Sogni and Romero, *Sogni*, for categories 1 and 2.

Besides the dream narratives and the references to dreams in the *Memoirs of the Oratory*, the Don Bosco autographs extant in ASC are: (1) the Address to Pius IX (a portion of the Prophecy of 1870); (2) the Message to Pius IX of 1873; (3) the Message to the Emperor of Austria of 1873; (4) The shorter report of the Lanzo (Savio) Dream of 1876; (5) the Message to Pope Leo XIII of 1878; (6) The (St.

who heard Don Bosco's narration.⁷ It is unlikely that the early Salesians who produced written reports from Don Bosco's narration willfully misrepresented what they heard. We must rather assume that they wrote down what they heard, or what they remembered, to the best of their ability. The original shape of the narrative must have been determined by Don Bosco himself. It would have been Don Bosco himself who in the telling (or in the writing) interpreted the dream images and perhaps expanded his interpretations in certain directions of his own choosing.

In this respect, it can be shown from Don Bosco's autographs that he may indeed have done so, at least on occasion. One example might be that of the Lanzo (Savio) Dream of 1876. Of this dream we have an autograph by Don Bosco, which appears to have been prepared in view of the narration and which remained unknown to later editors. We also have several manuscript reports from Don Bosco's oral narration. Now, the similar narration reports, while in agreement among themselves, differ considerably (though not in substance) from the autograph in length, order and narrative details.⁸ Another example is the San Benigno (Diamonds) dream of 1881. The *pentimenti*, in the form of corrections and changes, introduced by Don Bosco on his own autograph, are evidence of later choices made by him with regard to the text.⁹

In the second place, one must consider the editorial process which, starting from the archival manuscripts, produced the "finished" dream narratives as we know them. This was largely Lemoyne's work. It is to him that we owe not only many original reports from Don Bosco's narration, but also most of the final narratives edited first in *Documenti* and then in their final form in the *Biographical Memoirs*.

Now, Lemoyne's editorial procedures are well known. His method is essentially "compilatory," and "cumulative." In his dogged determination not to let the least detail in his sources go to waste he compiled all source material without much critical discernment. So he himself unwittingly states at several

Francis de Sales) Dream on Vocations of 1879; (7) The San Benigno Dream (of the Diamonds) of 1881; (8) The Provera Dream of 1883; (9) The Dream of the Handmaid of the Lord of 1887.

Narratives corrected by Don Bosco are Fr. Joachim Berto's copy of the San Benigno Dream of 1881 and Lemoyne's draft of the Second Missionary Dream of 1883.

⁷ These reports are found chiefly in ASC 111: Sogni—various collections, the most important of which are: Barberis, *FDBM* 1279-1298 and Lemoyne, *FDBM* 1308-1325. Dream reports are also found in ASC 110: Cronachette—chronicles, the most important of which are: Barberis, *FDBM* 792-898; Bonetti, *FDBM* 919-925; Ruffino, *FDBM* 1,206-1216; and Viglietti, *FDBM* 1,222-1,250.

⁸ Cf. Stella, *Don Bosco* II, p. 509-514.

⁹ Cf. Stella, *Don Bosco* II, p. 526-532.

junctions in the *Biographical Memoirs*.¹⁰ More tellingly, on a number of occasions he demonstrably goes beyond his sources and introduces interpretations and developments that can hardly be brought back to Don Bosco's narration.¹¹ He also often fails to recognize doublets, and has been shown to have "managed" his source texts.¹²

2. Critical Caution

This being the situation, critical caution should be exercised at every step. To this end, the following preliminary considerations appear to be important. (1) The dream narrative may have originated directly with Don Bosco in writing or orally, either immediately or at some time (even a long time) after the dream. (2) It may have originated with someone who heard Don Bosco's narration through a first-hand report produced either immediately or some time (even a long time) after the narration. (3) Don Bosco may or may not have reviewed or revised the written text reported from his narration. (4) Both writing and narration by the dreamer, and reports of narration by others, suffer from deficiencies inherent in dream recall, and more generally in memory and in reporting. (5) The time elapsed from the dream experience to writing and narration by the dreamer, or by a reporter, is a factor that accentuates the deficiencies inherent in memory and reporting.¹³ (6) While dreams are made up purely of images, mostly disconnected and confused, the dreamer, unless trained, is tempted to interpret and translate the images into a coherent sequence or story. (7) Intervening

¹⁰ Cf. e. g., *EMB* IX, p. 100, where one may read his comment on the dream on hell (p. 85-99).

¹¹ See Stella's comments with regard to the so-called Dream of the Two Columns [Stella, *Don Bosco* II, 550-554] and to the Lanzo (Savio) Dream [*Ibid.*, 514-517]; and Desramaut, *Études* VIII (*Cahiers*), p. 99-102, with respect to the Dream of the Saw.

¹² This may be seen in Lemoyne's handling of the vocation dream narratives, for which cf. Desramaut, *Memorie* I, 250-258 and A. Lenti, "Don Bosco's Vocation-Mission Dream," *cit.*, p. 50-81.

For Lemoyne's editorial method and procedures generally, cf. F. Desramaut, "Come hanno lavorato gli autori delle Memorie Biografiche," in *Don Bosco nella storia: Atti del 1° Congresso Internazionale di Studi su Don Bosco (Università Pontificia Salesiana, Roma, 16-20 gennaio 1989)* (Pubblicazioni del Centro Studi Don Bosco, Studi storici, 10), ed. Mario Midali. Roma: LAS, 1990, p. 37-65; and more briefly, A. Lenti, "Don Bosco's 'Boswell': John Baptist Lemoyne—the Man and His Work," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 1:2 (1990) [1-46] 34-44.

¹³ Psychologists stress the importance of writing the dream down immediately. "A dream not recorded within five minutes of awakening is usually forgotten. A person usually dreams five to seven times each night, so it is important to have a journal next to the bed so that dreams can be written down immediately upon their occurrence [Morton Kelsey, *Dreams: A Way to Listen to God*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978, p. 45].

experiences of the dreamer can affect the interpretation of the dream and the content of the narration; (8) Various concerns or interests (such as those of an educator, spiritual director, or founder) can have the same effect. (9) The above situations may be further aggravated when the dream narrative originated through a narration or report at second remove, or has been processed in transmission or in the final editing.

Such general considerations, applicable to all of Don Bosco's dreams, should also guide the present study of his missionary dreams.

II. Don Bosco's Dreams As Real Dreams

1. Real Dreams?

Great importance is attached to dreams today, and much work has been done in dream theory and dream interpretation. In as much as all dreams are creations of the unconscious mind or psyche, and symbolically reflect aspects of the unconscious demanding conscious attention, their importance and their usefulness cannot be overestimated. Introducing his recent book on dreams, J. Taylor sets forth ten basic assumptions about dreams, the first two of which are: "All dreams come in the service of health and wholeness;" and "No dream comes just to tell the dreamer what he or she already knows." This, he affirms, is true also, in fact especially, of nightmares: "My experience convinces me beyond doubt that the primary reason for the existence of nightmares is that the information they contain is of particular importance and value." He then goes on to stress the importance of working with dreams individually and in groups.¹⁴

Even though perplexed by his dreams, Don Bosco appreciated their importance. He believed that they were telling him something. He told his dreams and, with a remarkably modern attitude, he reflected on their meaning and sought to interpret them both individually and in group situations. The author just quoted also states that "only the dreamer can say with any certainty what meanings his or her dream may hold."¹⁵ Don Bosco's reflections on his own dreams should not be lightly dismissed.

Again, as will be seen presently, while the narrative interpretations that have come down to us in the *Biographical Memoirs* refer largely to the "manifest content" of Don Bosco's dreams, and often take the form of elaborate "un-dreamlike" narratives—Don Bosco is said, or claims, to be relating true dream experiences. Sometimes we are given a logical narrative, which makes a psychological interpretation of the dream experience problematic; but at other times Don Bosco is presented as struggling with symbolic dream images. In either case, whether we are given sparing symbolic images or extensive narrative interpretations, the texts are valuable indeed for an understanding of the dreamer's

¹⁴ Jeremy Taylor, *Where People Fly and Water Runs Uphill. Using Dreams to Tap the Wisdom of the Unconscious*. New York: Warner Books, 1992, p. 5-11.

¹⁵ Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 7, 11.

inner world. When taken in historical context and in conjunction with writings and utterances of the same period, this material may afford precious insights into the Saint's spiritual life and religious experience, as well as into his apostolic concerns, his fears and hopes for the Church and the Salesian Society. This seems particularly true of Don Bosco's missionary dreams and of Don Bosco's comments and reflections on them.

Obviously, our understanding is that behind these narratives stand real dreams. Given the moralistic, didactic character of many of them, especially those having the welfare of the boys or confreres in view, one might be led to dismiss them as mere imaginative stories or parables. Fr. Albert Caviglia, for one, thought that "a good number of these [narratives] could be regarded as moralistic and educational parables."¹⁶ What has come down to us as the *Dream of the Two Columns* of 1862 was narrated by Don Bosco, according to the original reports, as "an apologue or simile."¹⁷ This may be true of some dream narratives, but certainly not of most of them. A judgment in this regard can only be tentative and should be made only after careful consideration of all factors involved.

One should also bear in mind that in several instances the reality of the dream is confirmed by Don Bosco's own statement; by the fact that he related his dreams with absolute seriousness, sometimes to important persons and before solemn gatherings;¹⁸ by the fact that he regarded some dreams as important (or even as divine communications) and was guided by them in his decisions;¹⁹ and by the fact that he himself in certain instances took great pains in writing them down or correcting the reports.²⁰ Therefore, from a methodological point of view, unless there is good reason for thinking otherwise, dream narratives should be regarded as representing real dreams, and should be addressed as such.

2. Interpretation of Don Bosco's Dream Narratives as Dreams

Psychiatrists, psychotherapists, psychologists, and even educators and spiritual directors have a professional interest in dreams and their interpretation. But there

¹⁶ A. Caviglia, *Don Bosco*. Torino: L.I.C.E., 1934, p. 35f.

¹⁷ It may be noted that in *Documenti* VIII, p. 56 (FDBM 996 A6) Lemoyne retains that designation ("apologue or simile") in the main text; but changes it to "dream" in the marginal note. Likewise, in the *Biographical Memoirs* he retains the original designation in Don Bosco's narration, but 'dream' it is in his own introduction and comments [cf. *EBM* VII, 107-109].

¹⁸ For example, he related his original Vocation Dream and the First Missionary Dream to Pope Pius IX in 1858 and 1876 respectively. He narrated the Second Missionary Dream to the Third General Chapter in 1883.

¹⁹ This is the case with the Dream of 1844 and the "other dream" connected with it [cf. *MO-En*, p. 210].

²⁰ Cf. *ASC* 132: Autografi-Sogni, *FDBM* 1346f., texts critically edited in Romero, *Sogni*.

has been no scientific study of Don Bosco's dreams.²¹ Such a lack may be due to a difficulty inherent in Don Bosco's dream narratives. This may become clearer from an understanding of the unconscious forces that are operative in dreams.

[i] The Nature of Real Dreams and the Character of Don Bosco's Dream Narratives

In dreams, to put it in lay terms, a distinction is made between the "manifest content" (that is, the immediately apparent aspects) and the "latent content" (that is, that complex of unconscious drives and ideas that are masked by the dream scene and its manifest elements). Such unconscious aspects remain unknown to the subject and are not explicitly manifested because an automatic, unconscious force prevents their free expression. Some repressed, unconscious elements, however, elude the psyche's censorship and appear as manifest content in dreams; but they do so in a disguised, deformed and altered shape, one that remains incomprehensible to the dreamer. As a consequence, one of the basic characteristics of a dream scene is its "disconnectedness" or "absurdity." The dream plot does not follow a logical development. This is due also to psychological mechanisms operative in dreams, such as deformation, compression, symbolization. One of the processes operative in dreams is a type of symbolic representation by which an element present in the dream scene represents in compressed fashion something entirely different. Furthermore, dreams characteristically exhibit a disharmony between the dream content and the emotional states experienced by the dreamer in the process of dreaming. For instance, one might dream about the death of a dear person with the experience of joy and serenity. This is because the true meaning of the dream scene is different from that given by a rational interpretation.

Now, in contrast to the dream structure just described (by which dreams are often illogical, even absurd, and symbolically compressed), Don Bosco's dreams generally evince a logical, almost thought-out development. And likewise they present little symbolical compression, but are rather elaborately detailed and expansive. Also, the emotional reactions expressed in Don Bosco's dream narratives do not show the disharmony that is characteristic of dreams, but match rationally the content of the dream scene.

All this points to activity by the conscious mind. And this is what makes the psychological interpretation of Don Bosco's dream texts problematic. Generally speaking, Don Bosco's dream narratives are transparent, logical and comprehensible. Therefore, if there has been a dream experience, it has undergone a process of transformation, a secondary reworking.

²¹ A discussion of the matter is found in A. D'Acquino, *Psicologia di Don Bosco*, p. 274-286. See also the brief comments in F. Desramaut, *Études VIII (Cahiers)*, p. 110-113.

We may suppose that with the passing of hours, days, sometimes many years, from the dream experience, the illogical and absurd elements of the dream were discounted, and a rational construct was superimposed. Or we may suppose that special concerns of the educator and of the founder resulted in a "tendentious" narrative interpretation of the original images. Thereby the dream narrative acquired unity and logical coordination. The greater the extent in which this occurs, the more difficult it becomes to get to the latent content, that is, to the true psychological significance of the dream.

As will be discussed below, this situation is made more complex by later (post-Bosconian) editorial activity, such as reflected in the texts given in the *Biographical Memoirs*. Hence, the first task should be that of establishing a "critical text." This means going back to Don Bosco's narration, which may be recoverable either through an autograph or through firsthand reports. After this is done, one may further inquire into the character of individual dream narratives, and perhaps seek to separate the conscious overlays (by which the narrator interpreted the dream's manifest content) from the manifest content itself (the original dream images). Obviously, such judgments can only be tentative. Finally, one may inquire into the latent content, or true psychological significance of the dream. In the case of Don Bosco's dreams, as has already been indicated, this last-mentioned operation may no longer be possible, or may be beset with great difficulty even for the expert. It would, in any case, have to be carried out with the aid of such dream theories as those proposed by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and other more recent scholars.²²

[ii] Possible Interpretative Avenues

In spite of these drawbacks, however, some lines of interpretation are still open.²³

First, we may suppose that through the imagery of the dreams' manifest content Don Bosco was unconsciously expressing his deep need for what he lacked in actuality. In other words, from the psychological point of view, it was Don Bosco's own unconscious that created the dream for the hallucinatory fulfillment of a desire. Don Bosco's dreams, then, were the expression of a continuing unconscious wish, but one that at times coincided with conscious desires and expectations—that is, a latent, repressed wish, which endured over a long period of time and that occasionally surfaced.

A second suggestion for interpretation has to do with cyclical dreams, that is, dreams showing the same recurring content. Through these Don Bosco subconsciously projected the deep, continuing desire to help those that were in the same situation of affective, emotional frustration as he had been. This was an

²² Cf., e. g., Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. New York: The Modern Library, 1950; Maria Mahoney, *The Meaning of Dreams and Dreaming*. New York: The Citadel Press, 1970 (a guide to Carl Jung's interpretation).

²³ Cf. D'Acquino, *op. cit.*, p. 282-284, with a Freudian slant.

unconscious wish and need; even though at the conscious level this self-giving impulse found rational expression in the idea of "saving souls". This applies also to dreams in which Don Bosco dreamt that his boys were in a state of sin. In such cases we probably have an instance of a painful situation indirectly stimulating the expression of a totally opposite unconscious desire—to save souls. And since the dream often also expresses conscious concerns, the dream scene often contains elements consciously experienced or thought about previously in the waking state. Such conscious daytime survivals are taken over and utilized in the dream activity of the unconscious.

Thirdly, it should be noted that, in Don Bosco's case, dreams occurred in moments of uncertainty or of crisis experienced by himself personally or by the Salesian Society. One may then suppose that he managed or healed his inner tensions through the manifest content of his dreams. An example may be seen in the vocation dream, where Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary appear anthropomorphically as reassuring parental figures. These representations are figments of childhood religiosity which remain active also in the adult unconscious. With the passing of years, Don Bosco realized the staggering proportions of the work he was carrying forward, and he at times felt overwhelmed and frightened by the magnitude of God's purpose for him and for the Salesian Society. Hence the dreams became a source of comfort and strength in moments of crisis. Examples come to mind: the Dream of 1844;²⁴ the Dream of the Roses and Thorns (occurring at a time when his helpers were defecting);²⁵ The Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Missionary Dreams can also be so regarded. It might well be affirmed that Don Bosco's optimism, his self-reliance and his certainties sprang from his very unconscious.

From a "more Jungian" perspective, dreams are not merely about the past and the present as enclosed in the individual unconscious; they are also open to the future. Rightly interpreted, they may truly suggest where a solution to actual problems lies. They may also indicate the potentialities inherent in particular situations, and thus establish a psychological basis for sure expectations, for premonitive and predictive statements. This is especially true in the case of cyclical dreams, which have the effect of strengthening or illuminating the perception of such potentialities. The missionary dreams which (though not cyclical in the strict sense) possess cyclical elements, certainly had this effect.

[iii] Importance and Utility of Narrative Interpretation

Don Bosco's narrative expansions of the manifest content of dreams, regrettable as they may be from the standpoint of a psychological interpretation, may nonetheless represent his instinctive perception of where the dream pointed. The

²⁴ Cf. *MO-En*, 209f.

²⁵ This dream first took place in 1847 [?] and subsequently recurred cyclically. It was narrated in 1864 [cf. *EBM* III, 25ff.].

same may be said of the convictions expressed by Don Bosco after narrating the dream. Thus we cannot overestimate the role that Don Bosco's dreams fulfilled in animating and expanding the Salesian Congregation. And we may then understand why Don Bosco himself placed great importance on his dreams and was guided by them. Don Bosco's co-workers and spiritual sons also took his dreams seriously. They would trustfully and anxiously await the fulfillment of their predictions, and they would derive from them reassurance and comfort in their vocation.

III. The Revelatory Character of Don Bosco's Dreams

We have noted that, in contrast to the illogical and symbolically compressed character of true dreams, Don Bosco's dream narratives generally evince a logical and expansive development; and this fact points to activity by the conscious mind. The conclusion would have to be that, if there was a dream experience, it had undergone a process of transformation, a conscious secondary reworking. E. Ceria cites the logical character of Don Bosco's dreams as one of the proofs of their divine origin or inspiration—in other words, that they were revelations. He writes:

For an appreciation of the supernatural character of those dreams, one should note their logical and purpose-oriented plan and development. This is hardly ever the case in common dreams. The latter are usually composed of an haphazard sequence of images following one upon the other without rhyme or reason [...]. In Don Bosco's dreams, on the contrary, one always notices a serious and basic order in the dream sequences [...], without any of the irrationalities prevalent in common dreams.²⁶

The same author also sees the divine origin of many of Don Bosco's dreams in the fact that they made predictions which were subsequently verified. And he sees a further proof in the fact that, although Don Bosco publicly discouraged any supernatural interpretation of his dreams, privately he seems gradually to have believed that they were divine communications. In reference to a dream he had had on successive nights in January 1861, he stated that he was at first skeptical; but on making inquiries among the boys he realized that what he had seen in the dream (that some boys were in the state of sin) was true.²⁷ Fr. Joseph Cafasso, Don Bosco's spiritual director and confessor, apparently gave him reassurance in the matter.

In confessing to Fr. Cafasso, I sometimes accused myself of having spoken perhaps rashly [by narrating dreams that made predictions]. The

²⁶ *IBM XVII*, p. 11.

²⁷ Cf. *EBM VI*, 486-490 (quoting the Ruffino and Bonetti chronicles).

saintly priest would listen to me, think the matter over, and then say: "Since your predictions come true, you need not worry. You may continue to make them." It was only a few years later, though, that I firmly came to believe that those dreams came from God. That was when the young boy [Bernard] Casalegno died and—exactly as I had seen in my dream—his coffin was placed on two chairs under the portico, notwithstanding Father Cagliero's efforts to have it moved to the usual place.²⁸

Fr. Lemoyne testifies that Don Bosco himself in his later years agreed that some of his dreams might be "visions." Don Bosco begins his written narration of the Dream of the Handmaid of the Lord (January 3 and 4, 1887) with the words: "Whether I was awake or sleeping I cannot tell; nor was I able to figure out where I was [...]." He goes on to relate that on two successive nights the "Handmaid of the Lord" (speaking in Latin) came to assure him of young seminarian Louis Olive's recovery, and to give him advice regarding the Congregation. The morning of January 5, Don Bosco asked Fr. Lemoyne whether he thought that the Olive family should be told. A dialogue ensued in which (according to Lemoyne) Don Bosco admitted that some of his dreams might be interpreted as "visions."²⁹

The traditional understanding of a "revelation through dreams" is that God directly or through some angelic intermediary communicates knowledge during an individual's sleep "from the beyond" and in a pattern which defies the laws of dreaming. But the revelatory character of dreams need not be understood in such a bald way. This is not to say that revelation does not occur, but rather to say that in dreams it occurs not "from out there," but "from in here," with the

²⁸ *EBM* V, 242f. Don Bosco is referring to the Dream of the Specter and the Casket, related in *EBM* VII, 76-83. The boy's name was Victor Maestro, not Bernard Casalegno.

²⁹ *IBM* XVIII, 253-255.

Actually, "the most significant difference between a dream and a vision is that the dream occurs while we are sleeping and the vision appears while we are awake" [M. Kelsey, *Dreams: A Way, cit.*, p. 34]. But there is also a phenomenon which is referred to as a "dream vision". The psychologist would understand 'dream visions' as *hypnagogic images*, that is, images that arise in the half-waking state, or during the *introductory* phase of sleep. During this phase, as the conscious mind gradually merges into sleep, images may arise that resemble dream images. These occur especially when the subject goes to sleep in a state of tension due to worrying thoughts and concerns. Hypnagogic images are concrete representations of those thoughts and concerns. They take shape through a more or less conscious activity of the mind. And in this respect they differ from dream images. For, once truly dreaming, the subject no longer has any control or influence on the contents of the dream" [D'Acquino, *op. cit.*, p. 285f.].

individual unconscious acting as its intermediary.³⁰ In psychology, as in other areas of human science and experience, God's creative action should not be understood in a dualistic fashion.

Dreams are revelatory in various ways because of their very multifaceted nature. A dream may deal with happenings from yesterday, imaging a particular aspect that illuminates the happening in a new way. It may deal with forgotten elements, imaged in such a way that allows us to get in touch with that part of ourselves. It may image other people, but really be about an aspect of ourselves that is like them. It may deal with archetypes, that is, image not aspects of our individual psyche, but the evolutionary, deep structure of the psyche. Dreams may symbolically mediate extrasensory perceptions. There are clear dreams, that is, dreams in which visual or auditory phenomena are completely understandable. There are numinous dreams, that is, dreams which indicate a divine presence or in which an individual is confronted by something from the outer spiritual world. Kelsey states that "the extrasensory-perception dreams and the clear dreams are the most unusual. We may have numinous dreams once or twice in our entire life."³¹ Perhaps Don Bosco is an exception to this rule.

IV. Typology of Don Bosco's Dream Narratives, with Special Reference to the Missionary Dreams.

Don Bosco's dream narratives may be classified ("typed") on the basis of definite criteria. Thus, for instance, one may obtain such a typology on the basis of content (moralistic dreams, predictive dreams, etc.); on the basis of setting or images (dreams with country, pastoral setting, urban setting, etc); on the basis of textual tradition (dream narratives authenticated by Don Bosco, produced by direct witnesses, etc.); on the basis of their origin or inspiration, assuming that this could be ascertained (common dreams, revelatory dreams); and the like.

The "typing" criterion suggested here for Don Bosco's dream narratives is that of their *function-in-society*. This criterion responds to two questions jointly: Whom is the dream addressing? What is its aim? The adoption of this criterion for classifying the narratives may appear to question their nature as true dreams (for as creations of the unconscious, of themselves dreams address only the dreamer), or to preempt the question of a conscious narrative interpretation having occurred. This "typing" criterion merely recognizes the fact that Don Bosco's dream *narratives*, as they have come down to us, appear to have been

³⁰ The concept of the revelatory character of dreams described here is discussed at length by such authors as Morton Kelsey and John Sanford, and is based on a non-dualistic understanding of the spiritual world, and of the action of God in it through the Spirit [cf. M. Kelsey, *God, Dreams and Revelation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1974; J. Sanford, *Dreams, God's Forgotten Language*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968].

³¹ M. Kelsey, *Dreams: A Way*, *cit.*, p. 45.

intended for a certain function-in-society. If such a phenomenon raises questions as to the true nature of the dream, then it would have to be separately addressed.

When classified by this criterion, Don Bosco's dreams can in many instances be related to *specific concerns* arising out of *specific historical situations* in which Don Bosco found himself. Hence, the various types of dreams enjoy periods of greater intensity, reflecting perhaps Don Bosco's predominant concerns at that time. It seems indeed that the application of this criterion ties the dream narratives to historical situations in Don Bosco's life, thus providing a "context" for them—one that may reveal the likely provenance of subsumed motifs.

The principal types may be described as follows:

(1) *Dream narratives addressing Don Bosco (and the Salesian Society) in their essential vocation and apostolate to the young.*— Such are principally the vocation dream narratives of the years 1825-1845. Typically, in them Don Bosco's (and the Salesian Society's) vocation and apostolate are symbolized through pastoral images, animals, youngsters, buildings, churches, etc.

(2) *Dream narratives addressing Don Bosco's young charges and concerned with their spiritual welfare.*— This is the largest category, and the late 1850s and the 1860s, the period of Don Bosco's closest personal involvement in the education of young people, is their period of greatest intensity. These dream narratives reflect the concerns and problems of the educator and of the priest in care of souls. Moral and religious in character, they emphasize the virtues and practices of the Christian life, and the last things. They also contain clairvoyant and premonitory elements, with frequent predictions of deaths.

(3) *Dream narratives addressing political or religious persons and events.*— This smaller category reflects Don Bosco's concern during the period of the liberal revolution, the unification of Italy, the taking of Rome, and the situation arising therefrom. They are scattered over the years 1854-1874, in times of confrontation between Church and State. Their visionary imaging of the struggle of good against evil and their prophetic announcement of divine judgments confer on them an almost "apocalyptic" character.

(4) *Dream narratives addressing the Salesian Society for its worldwide vocation and apostolate.*— This fairly large category reflects Don Bosco's hopes and projects for the future of the Salesian Society. Among these, the five missionary dreams stand out prominently. Characteristic of these dreams are journeyings through strange lands and utopian envisioning of the Salesian work throughout the world. Logically, they may be regarded as forming a second vocation dream cycle.

Naturally enough, after the approval of the Salesian Society in 1869, and in the context of a great resurgence of missionary activity in the Church, the 1870s and '80s were bound to be the period of greatest incidence of these

dreams. But they occur in earlier periods as well, for Don Bosco foresaw great developments early on in his career.³²

(5) *Dreams addressing the Salesian Society for its perseverance.*—These dreams, frequent also in the 1870s and '80s, generally speaking reflect Don Bosco's concern and fears for the Salesian Society. They form a kind of diptych to the fourth category, not only because they refer to the Salesian Society, but also because they place those utopian hopes under strong prophetic cautions.

The classification suggested above allows us to situate the missionary dreams in the category of the vocation-mission dream. This type of dream is a well-documented religious phenomenon needing no apology and no demonstration. The authors already cited (M. Kelsey and J. Sanford) and others who have surveyed the phenomenon of dreams and dreaming in Christian history, and (more generally) in the history of religions, have provided ample documentation.³³ Don Bosco regarded the Salesian missions as the proper continuation by the Salesian Society of his own original apostolate. Hence, the missionary dreams, in as much as they project the worldwide extension of this apostolate, should be understood as standing in continuity with the earlier vocation dreams. It is significant that the last missionary dream (the Barcelona Dream of 1886) has the same setting and evokes the same pastoral images as the original vocation dream, referring to it specifically.

Don Bosco took these dreams seriously, and regarded them as divine invitations, if not outright revelations. No wonder then that in his efforts to interpret the images they presented, and in his more or less extensive narrations and commentaries, he voiced his premonitions, and even made predictions regarding the development of the Salesian work—generally or for particular areas. We shall likewise treat these dreams with the importance they deserve.

The five missionary dreams are ranged over a 15-year period (1871/2-1886). In reality, however, the last four occurred in quick succession in 1883, 1885 and 1886, at a distance of some 12 years from the first. This simple observation points up the special position of the First Missionary Dream. It climaxed the development of Don Bosco's missionary awareness, and it indicated that his resolve to launch the Society into the missionary field had solidified. In itself, it

³² Early examples are, for instance, the Dream of the Rose Bower and the Dream of the Mountain (difficulties, defections, success—1847 and ca. 1862); the Dream of the Wheel of Fortune (five decades of expansion—ca. 1856); the Dream of the Machine and Transparent Wheel, Part 3 (five decades of expansion—1861).

³³ E. Ceria writes: "Throughout history, from the well known *Passio* of St. Perpetua (203 C.E.) to the life story of a number of religious founders and foundresses, and of illustrious converts, many are the instances in which dreams figure as supernatural agents sent to warn, strengthen, inspire, and confront. A saint whose life bears a marked resemblance to that of our Founder, for the role which dreams played in directing and defining his mission, is St. Ansgar, the great ninth-century "Apostle of the North" [*IBM XVII*, p. 9].

imaged not so much the South American missions, as the missions simply—although, as it turned out, his decision was for Argentina.

The Second and Third Missionary Dreams, on the other hand, clearly and in similar ways project the development of the Salesian work in South America. Even the basic dream images are more related than it would appear at first reading. Both dreams feature “fantastic journeys” to view the Salesian apostolic field down the length and across the breadth of that sub-continent. They also feature “halls” in counter-balance—the former, a hall at the beginning preparatory to the mission; the latter, a hall at the end crowning the mission. Hence, the two dreams may be regarded as forming a diptych and as expressing, through premonition, the same basic “program.”

The last two dreams had a worldwide scope, and indicated that Don Bosco’s hopes for the expansion of the Salesian apostolate had taken an even bolder leap.

This threefold typology of Don Bosco’s missionary dreams determines the organization of the treatment that follows—with the understanding that the third category (comprising the Fourth and Fifth Missionary Dreams) will be dealt with in the next installment.

Part Two: The First Missionary Dream (1871/1872) —Don Bosco’s Resolve and Option for the Missions

I. Don Bosco’s Missionary Vocation—Development of His Missionary Awareness Leading to the First Missionary Dream

Dreams do not happen in a psychological or in a social vacuum. They are expressions of deep-seated wishes or needs, and in that respect they are very personal. But those wishes and needs are created by the development of the person within a social matrix. Hence, on the one hand dreams, even at the most personal level, contain a social significance; on the other hand, the actual dream occurrence is often motivated or stimulated by the person’s social concerns. The social significance of dreams, as already stated above, provides one level of interpretation, often the most apparent. It is because of this that, in the telling, the dream narrative is often shaped by the person’s social concerns.

All this is true also of Don Bosco’s dreams and of his missionary dreams in particular. These dreams, and the needs, wishes and possibilities which they express, must have occurred within a context determined by situations in his society. And it is this context that needs to be explored. Don Bosco’s missionary awareness and concerns have deep roots, even if these cannot be traced to their ultimate fibers; and they climaxed at a point when developments

in Church and society made participation in missionary activity by the Salesian Society a must.³⁴

1. Don Bosco Early Missionary Awareness

As far back as 1844, after completing his course in moral and pastoral theology, and as he was about to leave the *Convitto Ecclesiastico*, Don Bosco was considering joining the Oblates of the Virgin Mary and going to the missions.³⁵ The *Memoirs of the Oratory* make no mention of this "vocation crisis," but the *Biographical Memoirs* give it considerable space. It was Fr. Cafasso, Don Bosco's spiritual director, that decided the issue and set his mind at rest.³⁶

Don Bosco's growing missionary awareness is documented by the biographer. As a young priest he read the "Annals" and the "Edifying Letters."³⁷ At recreation, Don Bosco would stir up the youngsters' enthusiasm, as well as their imagination, with stories of the missions and the adventures of missionaries derived from these and similar publications.³⁸ He would talk about sending missionaries to evangelize distant regions, singling out Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego for special attention, according to Lemoyne, as early as 1848. One of the Oratory boys, James Bellia, would bring copies of the *Annals* from home and would read to Don Bosco during the noonday meal. Once Don Bosco interjected: "Oh, if only I had lots of priests and seminarians! I would send them to preach the Gospel in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego! Do you know why those places, my dear Bellia? Guess!" "Perhaps because that's where they are most

³⁴ In this brief survey I avail myself of the following essays: A Favale, "Le missioni cattoliche nei primordi della Congregazione Salesiana," in *Missioni Salesiane 1875-1975. Studi in occasione del Centenario*, a cura di P. Scotti (Publicazioni del CSSMS, Studi e Ricerche 3. Roma, LAS, 1977), p. 13-48; and A. Martín G., *Origen de las misiones salesianas. La Evangelización de las gentes según el pensamiento de San Juan Bosco. Estudios históricos con aportación de documentos inéditos* (Publicaciones del Instituto Teológico Salesiano, Colección Histórica. Guatemala, Instituto Teológico Salesiano [Escuela Gráfica Salesiana, Barcelona-Sarriá], 1978), esp. p. 47-81.

³⁵ The Congregation of the Oblates of Mary was founded by Fr. Pio Brunone Lanteri (1759-1830) in association with other priests, and received Church approval in 1825 and 1826. In 1834 the Oblates were established at the Church of the Consolata in Turin. Among other ministries they undertook missions in Burma, where a Vicariate Apostolic was established in 1842. It was natural that Don Bosco should have come under Oblate influence during his *Convitto* years (1841-1844).

³⁶ Cf. *EBM* I, p. 246f., 379f.; II, p. 152.

³⁷ The *Annals* and the *Edifying Letters* were publications of the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* and of the *Pontifical Association of Holy Childhood* founded in Lyons—the former by Pauline Jaricot (1799-1862) with Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson (1785-1844) in 1822; the latter by the same Forbin-Janson in 1842 [cf. *New Catholic Encyclopedia* VII, p. 857f. and V, p. 1001f.].

³⁸ Cf. *EBM* VI, p. 240f. (for the 1860s).

needed," Bellia would venture. "Right! Those people are the most forsaken!"³⁹ In 1854 Don Bosco had a premonition of young Cagliero's missionary vocation, when he saw a dove descend over the lad's head as he lay in his sickbed which was surrounded by a group of natives.⁴⁰

His friendship with local clergy deeply involved in promoting the missions, and his contacts with religious congregations of both men and women that were engaged in missionary activity, kept his missionary interest alive and growing, and helped strengthen his missionary resolve. Such events in the pontificate of Pius IX as the canonization of the first Japanese martyrs on June 8, 1862, and the beatification of another group of 205 on June 29, 1867, in connection with the celebration of the eighteenth centenary of St. Peter's martyrdom, served as occasions for promoting the missionary spirit at the Oratory.

2. Don Bosco's Missionary Awareness in the Context of the Resurgence of Missionary Activity in the Church of the Nineteenth Century

Don Bosco's missionary awareness and concern should be understood in the context of a general resurgence of missionary interest and activity in the Church at this time. After the setback of the French revolution and as a reaction to it, Europe experienced a profound and widespread spiritual revival, favored also by Romantic ideals. Even as the liberal, anticlerical spirit was taking root especially among the growing middle class, the Church succeeded in reorganizing structures for the pastoral care of the faithful, reopening seminaries, bolstering and nourishing the faith of the people through preaching, religious instruction and the press, bringing back to the fold those that had strayed, and even converting unbelievers. The revived Christian spirit with its powerful missionary inspiration invaded all strata of Church and society, from the upper echelons of the clergy and the intelligentsia to the lower clergy and the common folk. It expressed itself in the learned as well as in the popular press, and in practical, grassroots support. In this respect, one must recognize the contribution of religious orders and congregations both of men and of women, and of both active and contemplative life. This contribution was in the form of a missionary spirituality which may well be the characteristic spirituality of the century, and then of a missionary awareness and fervor that bore practical fruit in the growing number of individuals swelling the ranks of the missionaries already in the field.

Such a revival within the Catholic Church would obviously not have been possible without the initiative having been taken at the highest level by the Popes of the post-Napoleonic and following periods. Within the nineteenth century, the most decisive steps were taken under the pontificate of Pope Leo

³⁹ *EBM* III, p. 257. For similar utterances, cf. *EBM* IV, p. 294 (for the 1850s) e *EBM* VI, p. 465 (for 1860).

⁴⁰ Cf. *EBM* V, p. 68.

XIII (1878-1903). But the missionary movement had already made significant progress under Popes Gregory XVI (1831-1846) and Pius IX (1846-1878).⁴¹

Among other achievements, Gregory XVI acted firmly to bring about a transition from the old missionary structure of the *patronato* to a new system of local churches and missions. He denounced slavery and actively promoted its abolition. He gave new mandates to the *Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith* for the governance of the missions, for the organization of local churches, for the recruiting of missionaries, and for the foundation of apposite seminaries.⁴²

In a less systematic way, Pius IX continued his predecessor's programs, adding his unwavering support of all missionary initiatives. The official structuring of the Church in missionary countries in his pontificate bore enduring fruit. In non-Christian countries alone, this Pope created 33 Apostolic Vicariates, 15 Prefectures and 3 Delegations.⁴³

3. Religious Communities and the Missions

One of the most amazing manifestations of missionary resurgence in the Church during the nineteenth century was the new missionary orientation taken by religious orders and congregations, old and new. Established religious communities, such as the Priests of the Foreign Missions of Paris, The Priests of the Mission (Vincentians), the Society of Jesus newly reestablished, Mendicant Orders and Clerks Regular—these and others (some 55 in all) returned to, or undertook missionary work with renewed vigor.

However, during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, it was the new religious congregations that made all the difference. The following statistics, though probably incomplete, give some idea of the phenomenon. There appeared some 90 new congregations of men, of which about two-thirds were clerical and one-third lay, with the missionary apostolate either as their principal or secondary purpose. At least four times as many new religious

⁴¹ The summary description that follows of official initiatives in the Church is based on, besides the works already cited [cf. note 34 above], the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, under entries of the Popes, countries, religious congregations, and founders concerned.

⁴² The Pope's official statements are to be found in such documents as: the encyclical, *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, of September 18, 1835; the brief, *Commissi nobis*, of August 4, 1835; the apostolic letter, *In supremo apostolatus fastigio*, of December 3, 1839; the instruction to *Propaganda Fide*, *Neminem profecto*, of November 23, 1845.

⁴³ Pius IX also acted to reorganize the Church in "non-Catholic" countries, considered missionary jurisdictions at the time. In the United States he erected 38 new dioceses and 11 ecclesiastical provinces. In Australia he established an ecclesiastical province and 9 dioceses. In 1850 he established the Catholic hierarchy in England, with one archbishop and 12 suffragan bishops.

congregations of women of apostolic life, whether dependent on, or independent from congregations of men, were founded in the same period.

Among the congregations that would have most influenced Don Bosco's thinking and decisions concerning the missions, the following might be mentioned:

The *Priests and Sisters of the Sacred Hearts (Picpus)*, founded in 1792/1817 and 1797/1817 respectively by Pierre Marie Joseph Coudrin, (1768-1837) with the cooperation of Henriette Aymer de la Chevalerie (1767-1837).

The *Oblates of Mary Immaculate*, founded in 1817/1826 by Charles Eugène Mazenod (1772-1861).

The *Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, founded by François Marie Paul Libermann (1802-1852) in 1839/40, joined in 1848 with the *Priests Missionaries of the Holy Spirit*.

The *Institute for the Foreign Missions of Milan*, founded in 1850 and joined in 1871 to the *Pontifical Seminary of Saints Peter and Paul for the Foreign Missions*, from which then sprang the *Pontifical Institute for the Foreign Missions (PIME)*, (1926).

The *Society for the African Missions*, founded in 1856 by [Bp.] Melchior Marie Joseph de Marion-Brésillac (1813-1859).

The *Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Scheut)*, founded in 1862 by Théophile Verbist (1823-1868)

The *Missionary Priests* and the *Missionary Sisters of Verona*, founded in 1867 by [Bp.] Daniele Comboni (1831-1881).

The *Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)* and the *Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters)*, founded in 1868 and 1869 respectively by [Card.] Charles Martial Allemand Lavigerie (1825-1892).

When one considers the formidable array of missionary-oriented congregations, one understands why Don Bosco decided to launch his own Society into missionary work. Apart from being germane to the charism of the founder, and a natural extension of his specific apostolate, for a nineteenth-century religious congregation to engage in missionary activity was "the thing to do."

4. Determining Influences

The last two religious groups mentioned were perhaps the most innovative of the new forces in the mission field (Africa); and their founders, Bishop Comboni and Cardinal Lavigerie, were indubitably the most eminent missionaries of the century.⁴⁴ They were also the ones that most directly inspired Don Bosco's own missionary option, even through this was not to be for Africa.

⁴⁴ Daniele Comboni (1831-1881) studied languages, medicine and theology with the aim of working for the evangelization of Africa. Once ordained a priest, he became a missionary on the White Nile (1857), and for this mission he founded the Missionary Fathers and Sisters of Verona (1867). Missions were established in Sudan, and a seminary for the training of native clergy, in Cairo, Egypt

On December 4, 1864, Fr. Daniele Comboni visited the Oratory to confer with Don Bosco on the missions. He had just been to Rome, where he had presented to the Pope a plan for the evangelization of Africa embodying the principle that Africa was to be evangelized by Africans. No doubt their conversation during that visit must have been concerned with the plan, and the two must have exchanged views on missionary strategy, for Don Bosco would later lay down a similar strategy for his missions—a strategy, however, in which young people would figure prominently. Fr. Comboni was asked to speak to the boys on the missions, and he did so with great success.⁴⁵ In letters of September 1869 and July 1870, Fr. Comboni laid before Don Bosco a bold scheme for establishing the Salesian work in Africa.⁴⁶ The second letter indicates that indeed they had discussed strategy. Their thinking agreed on many points, even though on a later occasion Don Bosco was critical of the Combonian missionary style.⁴⁷

Charles Lavigerie was likewise well acquainted with Don Bosco and his work. In the years 1868-1870 he repeatedly asked Don Bosco for Salesian missionaries to help in North Africa and Sudan where he was Apostolic Delegate—a request that Don Bosco could not at the time comply with. He also asked Don Bosco to accept a number of Algerian Khabili orphans—which Don Bosco was happy to do.⁴⁸ The Cardinal and Don Bosco met again in Paris in 1883. On that occasion, in a brief address, he referred to Don Bosco as the “St. Vincent de Paul of Italy.”⁴⁹ Card. Lavigerie visited the Oratory again in 1885, with another request for Salesian missionaries for Africa. But even this request could not be met.⁵⁰

(1867). He was named Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa (1872), and later was appointed Vicar (1877). He pioneered new methods of evangelization, and wrote against slavery, actively working for its abolition. As a linguist, geographer and ethnologist, he did scientific work in the field of African languages and cultures.

Charles Lavigerie (1825-1892), was named to the chair of Church History at the Sorbonne in 1857, and became auditor at the Roman Rota in 1861. In 1863 he was appointed bishop of Nancy, and in 1867 bishop of Algiers. After being appointed Apostolic Delegate of the Western Sahara and the Sudan in 1868, he founded his two missionary congregations for Africa. In 1882 he was named Cardinal Archbishop of Carthage. From this position he became a powerful force in implementing Pope Leo XIII's missionary directives, especially with respect to fostering the development of native peoples, with particular emphasis on the protection of the black population and the abolition of slavery.

⁴⁵ Cf. *EBM* VII, 488.

⁴⁶ Cf. *EBM* IX, 331f. and 430f.

⁴⁷ Cf. *EBM* XII, p. 199f.

⁴⁸ Cf. *EBM* IX, p. 216, 347f., 369, and 452.

⁴⁹ Cf. *IBM* XVI, p. 252-254.

⁵⁰ Cf. *IBM* XVII, p. 472f.

5. The Missionary Atmosphere Surrounding Vatican I

In spite of the fact that Pius IX did not take any new bold steps in missionary strategy, but faithfully continued his predecessor's policies, the missionary movement had gained great momentum by the time of the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). The Council therefore was bound to address this important question. During its preparation, the participation by Vicars Apostolic was debated, and finally allowed, if only because otherwise Africa, Asia and Oceania would have remained unrepresented. But beyond such juridical matters, the missionary vocation of the Church and its theological basis called for a reexamination. "Petitions" (proposals) by missionary bishops were submitted. Bishop Comboni, in line with his plan for evangelization, submitted a proposal for the defense and promotion of black peoples in his mission area, which was circulated in June 1870 and was signed by 70 Council fathers. It was after this action, that he wrote the second of the above-mentioned letters to Don Bosco.

True, the *Schema constitutionis super Missionibus Apostolicis* that resulted, failed in many ways to address the urgent theological and strategic questions concerning the missions.⁵¹ But the many missionary bishops who took part (some 180 of them), by their very presence, did much to advance the missionary cause. They reinforced missionary awareness in both clergy and laity; they mobilized spiritual and financial support; they recruited personnel (particularly from religious congregations).

During the Council and after its adjournment, Don Bosco had occasion to meet a number of missionary bishops and to hear their requests. At the time of his sojourn in Rome between January 24 and February 22, during which he actively campaigned for papal infallibility, Don Bosco spoke to some bishops who had heard the Salesian Society praised on the Council floor. After the

⁵¹ For a brief, yet detailed presentation of how Vatican I addressed the missionary question, and for a discussion of the Schema and its contents, cf. A. Favale, *op cit.*, p. 29-44.

The Schema never came up for discussion because of the Council's untimely adjournment due to the occupation of Rome by the Italian army. Read today, it appears retrograde in regard to both missiology and strategy, especially in its negative attitude toward the formation of native clergies.

Council, a few bishops visited the Oratory (two from China) to ask for Salesian missionaries.⁵² Requests began pouring in from various parts of the world.⁵³

Don Bosco's First Missionary Dream was a consequence of all these experiences. Contacts with missionaries and requests by missionary bishops brought a sustained and ever growing missionary awareness to near fever-pitch in connection with Vatican I and its aftermath.

II. Textual History and Text of the First Missionary Dream

When discussing in general terms above the question of the textual tradition of the dream narratives in the *Biographical Memoirs*, we stressed the importance of recovering, in so far as it is possible from archival documents, the text authenticated by Don Bosco or produced through first-hand reports. This is what we shall attempt to do in case of this and subsequent dreams.

According to Don Bosco's own statement as reported in the sources, this dream (commonly called *Dream of the Patagonian Missions*) took place in 1871 or 1872. We are also told that he tried to find out what people and what land he had seen in the dream, but was able to do so only after he had received the offer from Argentina (1874). In February-March 1875 Don Bosco was in Rome and was received by Pius IX. On that occasion he may have discussed the Argentine mission with the Pope (though there is no record that he did so); in any case he did not speak of his dream.⁵⁴ He related the dream for the first time to Pius IX the following year, in March 1876—hence, at least four years after its occurrence, and a few months after the first sending of missionaries to Argentina. Later he related the dream to some of his men.

1. Textual History

[Barberis Report]

The primary source for the text of the dream narrative is a first-hand report by Fr. Julius Barberis (designated here as the *Barberis Report*).

⁵² Cf. *EBM* IX, p. 432f.

It was at that time that Bishop Joseph Alemany of San Francisco requested Salesians to staff St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum in San Rafael, CA. This he did in a letter from Rome dated July 20, 1870, and a little later on his visiting Turin. Don Bosco accepted, but subsequent negotiations bore no practical results. For details, cf. M. Ribotta, "The Road Not Taken," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 1:2 (1990) 45-67, esp. p. 54-60.

⁵³ Cf. P. Stella, Don Bosco, [vol. I:] *Life and Work*. New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1985, p. 180f.

⁵⁴ Cf. *EBM* XI, p. 98-128.

The *Barberis Report* consists of nearly four pages of neat script in a single column. It is neither in Barberis' nor in Lemoyne's hand, but appears to be a calligraphic copy made from Barberis' original draft and placed in Lemoyne's file. Marginal corrections in Lemoyne's hand appear opposite the first and second paragraph only. Thereafter, Lemoyne merely inserted editor's slashes at places where he planned to do editorial work. The *Barberis Report* is the primary source, and was so regarded by Lemoyne.⁵⁵

[*Lemoyne Report*]

Fr. Lemoyne also claims (in *Documenti*) to have drafted a first-hand report from a separate narration made to him by Don Bosco on some unspecified occasion (designated here as the *Lemoyne Report*).

The *Lemoyne Report* consists of nearly four pages of neat script in Lemoyne's own handwriting. The only marginal addition (also in Lemoyne's hand) is near the beginning. Editor's slashes at various points in the text indicate corresponding places in the *Barberis Report* where editorial work would be done to produce the unified text for *Documenti*.⁵⁶

Unlike Barberis's text, Lemoyne's has no introduction, and it does not claim to be a first-hand report. It is styled in the third person.⁵⁷

[*Documenti and Biographical Memoirs*]

Finally, Fr. Lemoyne, following his accustomed method, edited the two reports into one narrative, with adjustments, in *Documenti*. And this is the text that Fr. Angelo Amadei transcribes, with some secondary editing, in the *Biographical Memoirs*.⁵⁸

2. Text of the First Missionary Dream

⁵⁵ The *Barberis Report* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, "31 Luglio 1876, Sogno," *FDBM* 1314 D1-4.

Barberis' autograph could not be traced; it is not where one would expect to find it, namely, in ASC 110: Cronachette, Barberis, Quaderno 8, where the pages are missing, though the dream is listed in the Table of Contents [cf. *FDBM* 843 E9 e 844 A3 and 5].

⁵⁶ The *Lemoyne Report* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, "1874? Le missioni: sogno," *FDBM* 1314 A8-11.

⁵⁷ It is only in *Documenti* that Lemoyne claims to have heard the dream, too, and to have written a first-hand report. Toward the end of Barberis' introduction (which he transcribes), he inserts the words: "Fr. Lemoyne was also made privy to this secret; he and Fr. Barberis drafted separate reports of this dream." He concludes by adapting Barberis' closing words: "Don Bosco said that we were the first to be told of this 'sort-of-vision'" [*Documenti* XIV, p. 140; *FDBM* 1,024 B8].

⁵⁸ *Documenti* XIV [c. 28], p. 140-143 is in ASC 110: Cronachette, Lemoyne, *FDBM* 1,024 B8-11.

The text of the *Biographical Memoirs* is edited by A. Amadei in *IBM* X, p. 54s. (dream text) and 1267-1270 (description of Don Bosco's attempts to identify the people and the region). These pages correspond to *EBM* X, p. 46-48 and 543-548.

The text of the dream will be given first according to the *Barberis* and *Lemoyne Reports* separately, and then according to the compilation of *Documenti*. It will be given in English translation, but a translation that will attempt to reflect the originals as closely as possible.⁵⁹

[i] Text of the First Missionary Dream According to the *Barberis Report*

(Marginal notes are inserted into the main text in *italics*.)

July 31, 1876

Don Bosco's Dream of the Missions in Patagonia

Report by Fr. Julius Barberis

[Reporter Barberis' Introduction]

Here is the dream on account of which Don Bosco was later to decide to give some thought to the missions of Patagonia. He first related it to the Pope on the last trip he took to Rome / (*before July 31, 1876*). Subsequently [he related it] to some of us. On July 30, [he told it] to Fr. Bodrato.⁶⁰ From him I heard it too on the evening of the same day at Lanzo, where for some twenty days I had been vacationing with half of the clerical novices' class. Three days later, back in Turin, Don Bosco related it to me, as we paced to and fro in the library. I took care not to mention that I had already heard it, because Don Bosco usually omits one detail or another [in a first narration]; and also because, heard from his own lips, it would make a stronger impression on me. He told us we were the first to hear it:⁶¹

⁵⁹ For this reason, I opted for near-literal rendering, in these and subsequent English translations of dream narratives.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, where the source reads "*selvaggi*" I translate "savages"; where it reads "*indigeni*" I translate "natives"; where it reads "*barbari*" I translate "barbarians". These terms, especially the term "savages", should be understood in the sense given to them in Romantic and post-Romantic literature, especially in the missionary journals of the day.

Titles and divisions in the text are introduced to facilitate reading.

⁶⁰ Francis Bodrato (1823-1880), a school teacher at Mornese, met Don Bosco in 1864 and became a Salesian in 1865. Economist of the Society at this time (July 1876), he would lead the second band of 22 missionaries to Buenos Aires in November 1876, and would be appointed head of the Salesian work there in 1877.

⁶¹ Fr. Barberis was alone with Don Bosco. But Don Bosco's reported statement may include Fr. Bodrato, and perhaps Fr. Lemoyne; or it may simply mean that Don Bosco had decided to tell the dream to some of his men.

[Dream Setting]

I seemed to find myself in a region, wild and completely unknown [to me], / *It was an immense, totally uncultivated plain on which neither hills nor mountains could be seen. At its farthest boundary, beyond the ken of human eye, it was wholly encircled by jagged mountains that formed a crown on either side of it. On this plain I saw two bands throngs of men /roaming about. They were nearly naked, of extraordinary height and build, fierce-looking, with shaggy, / long hair, bronzed and dark-complected, and clothed with their only garments being long cloaks draping down from their shoulders and made of animal hides. For weapons they carried a kind of long spear and a sling. /*

[Scene I]

Just then a great number of individuals came into view whose way of acting showed them to be missionaries belonging to various [religious] orders. They approached [the natives] in order to preach the faith of J. C. [to them]. But [the natives] with diabolical fury and with hellish glee slaughtered them all, hacking their flesh to pieces, and impaling it on their long, pointed spears. From time to time bloody fighting would break out among them; and between them and neighboring peoples. /

[Scene II]

After observing these horrible slaughters for some time, I asked myself, “How can one convert such brutal people?” At that moment I saw a small group of missionaries, different from the former, advancing with cheerful mien toward them, preceded by a band of youngsters. I trembled at the mere thought that they were going to get killed. I walked up / to them; I did not recognize any of them, but I could tell that they were Salesian missionaries, our very own. “How can this be?” [I asked myself.] I did not want them to advance any farther, and was about to stop them and force them back, when I realized that their arrival was causing widespread joy among that throng of barbarians. They lowered their weapons, ceased their savage behavior, and received our missionaries most courteously.

[Scene III]

In utter amazement I mused: “Let’s see how things will turn out.” I then saw that [the natives] were being taught by our missionaries, and they were paying willing attention and were learning. [The missionaries] were admonishing them, and they were putting their admonitions into practice. / I watched them for a

while, and then I realized that they were reciting the rosary, missionaries and savages, peaceably together. /

[Conclusion of Dream Narrative]

After a while one of the missionaries intoned the [hymn], "Praise Mary, Ye Faithful Tongues;"⁶² and all those men with one voice took up the song. They sang it through in such unison and with such power that I woke up with a start.

[Conclusion of Don Bosco's Narration and Comments]

I had this dream four or five years ago, / but I did not make much of it [at the time], especially as I was unable to learn what people might be indicated by the characteristics I had observed in those savages. At first I thought they might be Africans / from the region of Mgr. Comboni's mission.⁶³ Then, as I was at the time negotiating with Mgr. Raimondi for missions in Hong Kong, / I thought they might be those islanders; but upon investigation I learnt that neither the area nor its inhabitants matched what I had seen [in the dream]. Some time later we had a visit from Archbishop Quin of Australia [*sic*],⁶⁴ and I made inquiries about the condition and character of the savages there; but again what he told me did not tally with what I had seen. And yet the impression the dream had made on me, and the intimations it had left with me, were such that it could not be disregarded; especially since, as past experience had taught me, what I had seen might well come to pass. Meanwhile, we began to talk about the Argentine Republic, and [to discuss] proposals for [foundations in] Buenos Aires and San Nicolás made to us through the Argentine consul.⁶⁵ I gathered data, made inquiries, sought information, and soon reached the certain conclusion that the people I had seen were the Patagonian natives dwelling in the southern regions of that republic. From then on I entertained no further doubt as to where my concern and my efforts should be directed.

⁶² "*Lodate Maria, o lingue fedeli*," was a popular hymn at the time. Don Bosco included it in his collection of hymns appended to the first edition of the *Giovane Provveduto* (1847).

⁶³ Cf. note 44 above and related text.

⁶⁴ Matthew Quinn, Archbishop of Sydney, Australia [cf. *EBM X*, p. 544f]

⁶⁵ John Baptist Gazzolo (1827-1895), a Genoese navy captain who had migrated to Argentina, was appointed Argentine Consul at Savona in 1870. He met Don Bosco almost immediately after his appointment (1871-1872) on visits to the Salesian schools of Alassio and Varazze [cf. Jesús Borrego, "Primer proyecto patagónico de Don Bosco," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 5 (1986) [21-72], p. 48, note 147].

For the story of the Argentine proposal, cf. *EBM X*, 552-558.

[ii] Text of the First Missionary Dream According to the *Lemoyne Report*

(The sole marginal note is inserted into the text in *italics*)

1874? The missions: a dream

Don Bosco dreamt—

[Dream Setting]

He seemed to be standing in an immense plain on which neither hills nor mountains could be seen. It was uncultivated. Throngs of men wandered about [that plain]. They were nearly naked; their hair was long, and long cloaks made of animal hides hung from their shoulders. They were armed with lances. /

These widely scattered groups of men presented various scenes to the onlooker: *some were hunting wild beasts*; some [others] were walking about with bleeding chunks of meat impaled on the point of their lances; others were fighting among themselves; [still] others were engaged in combat against soldiers who were dressed in the European manner; the ground was littered with corpses.

[Scene I]

Don Bosco shuddered at the sight—when suddenly some missionaries appeared at the far end of the plain. / He looked intently at them, but did not recognize anyone. They walked over to the savages; but no sooner had those barbarians caught sight of them that they pounced on them and killed them by cruelly tearing them to pieces. Then the fighting resumed as before. /

[Scene II]

Just then other missionaries appeared in the far distance. Don Bosco looked at them closely and recognized them. They were priests and seminarians of our Congregation. Those in front were known to him; but many others, obviously Salesians, who followed were wholly unknown to Don Bosco. They advanced toward those hordes of savages. Don Bosco was frightened. He wanted to stop them. He feared that at any moment they would meet with the same fate as the former missionaries. / Praying the Rosary of Mary Most Holy in a loud voice, the Salesians advanced through the crowd of savages. The savages, meanwhile, had gathered around from all directions, making room for the missionaries as they passed through. /

[Scene III]

The Salesians came and stood in the midst of the surrounding throng, and knelt down. The savages laid their weapons at the feet of the missionaries, and knelt down, too. Then savages and missionaries joined in the sacred song, "Praise Mary, Ye Faithful Tongues."

[Narrator's or Reporter's Conclusion]

This dream made a deep impression on Don Bosco, and he regarded it as a message from heaven. True, its specific meaning eluded him; but he understood that it had something to do with the foreign missions, which indeed had been all along his dearest wish. / He had, however, taken no decision in this regard because, when broaching the subject to Pius IX, the Pope of the Immaculate Conception had replied: "Not yet. See that your work is firmly established in Italy first; When the time is right for you, I'll let you know."

In the wake of this dream, Don Bosco felt the old yearning of his heart stirring back to life. The missions are now a priority in his thinking.⁶⁶

[iii] Comments On the *Barberis* and *Lemoyne* Reports

Although the two reports are in general agreement, the difference in detail is considerable. *Barberis* is more ample and offers significant variants: (1) the region was "wholly encircled by jagged mountains;" (2) the natives were people "of extraordinary height and build;" (3) as weapons they carried both spear and sling (*Lemoyne*: only the lance); (4) the Salesian missionaries were "preceded by a band of youngsters" (not so in *Lemoyne*); (5) the evangelizing actions of the missionaries are described (not so in *Lemoyne*).

Lemoyne, on the other hand dwells at greater length on the activities of the natives, adding that "some were engaged in combat against soldiers dressed in the Europeans manner." He states that Don Bosco took the dream to be "a message from heaven," and that only Pius IX's advice (on some unspecified occasion) had delayed his decision to act in regard to the missions.

[iv] Lemoyne's Compilation in *Documenti*

⁶⁶ There follows immediately [cf. *FDBM* 1314 A10f.] a fairly lengthy comment in Lemoyne's hand (over one thickly written page in two columns) describing Don Bosco's attempts to identify the people and the region of the dream. For this he takes over and expands what the *Barberis Report* says on the same subject (Conclusion of Don Bosco's narration). This material underwent further editing in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs* [cf. *Documenti* XIV, p. 141-143, *FDBM* 1024 B9-11; *EBM* X, 543-545].

Chapter XVIII
Don Bosco's Dream on the Missions of Patagonia

[Reporters' Introduction]

Here is the dream on account of which Don Bosco decided for the Missions of Patagonia. He first related it to the Pope on a trip he made to Rome (in 1876). Subsequently [he related it] to some of his priests. On July 30, 1876, [he told it] to Fr. Bodrato. From him Fr. Julius Barberis heard it the evening of the same day at Lanzo, where for some twenty days he had been vacationing with half of the clerical novices' class. Three days later, back in Turin, Fr. Barberis heard the same dream from Don Bosco's own lips, as they paced to and fro in the library. Fr. Barberis took care not to mention that he had already heard it, because some times Don Bosco adds details omitted in earlier narrations. Fr. Lemoyne, too, was made privy to this secret; and he and Fr. Barberis drafted separate reports of this dream. Don Bosco said that we were the first to be told of this "sort-of-vision." We report his words almost to the letter.

[Dream Setting]

I seemed to find myself in a region, wild and completely unknown [to me]. It was an immense, totally uncultivated plain on which neither hills nor mountains could be seen. At its farthest boundary, however, it was wholly surrounded by jagged mountains that formed a crown on either side of it. Roaming about on this plain I saw throngs of men. They were nearly naked, of extraordinary height and build, fierce-looking, with shaggy long hair, bronzed and dark-complected, their only garments being long cloaks made of animal hides and draping down from their shoulders. For weapons they carried a kind of long lance and the sling (*bolos*).

These widely scattered throngs of men presented various scenes to the spectator. Some were running about hunting wild beasts, while others were walking around with bleeding chunks of meat stuck on the point of their lances. Some were fighting among themselves on one side, while on the other side others were engaged in hand-to-hand combat with soldiers who were dressed in the European manner; the ground was littered with corpses.

[Scene I]

I shuddered at the sight—when, at the far end of the plain, numerous persons came into view whose dress and way of acting showed them to be missionaries belonging to various [religious] orders. They were approaching those barbarians in order to preach the religion of Jesus Christ [to them]. I looked intently at them, but did not recognize anyone. They walked up to the savages; but no sooner had the barbarians caught sight of them that they pounced on them with diabolical fury and with hellish glee, and killed them all. They slaughtered them

ferociously, hacking them to pieces and spearing up chunks of flesh with their long, pointed spears. Then at intervals they would resume fighting among themselves and with neighboring peoples.

[Scene II]

After observing these horrible slaughters for some time, I asked myself, "How can one convert such brutal people?" At that moment in the distance I saw a small group of missionaries, different from the former, advancing with cheerful mien toward the savages, preceded by a band of youngsters. I shuddered, as I thought, "They are going to get killed." I walked up to them. They were seminarians and priests. I looked at them intently and recognized them as our Salesians. Those in front were known to me; and although I did not recognize the many who followed, I realized that they, too, were Salesian missionaries, our very own. "How can this be?" I asked myself. I did not want them to advance any farther, and was about to stop them. I feared that at any moment they would meet with the same fate as the former missionaries. I intended to force them back, when I realized that their arrival was causing widespread joy among those throngs of barbarians. They lowered their weapons, ceased their savage behavior, and received our missionaries most courteously.

[Scene III]

In utter amazement I mused: "Let's see how things will turn out." I then saw that our missionaries were advancing toward those hordes of savages. [The natives] were being taught [by our missionaries], and they were paying willing attention and were learning diligently. [The missionaries] were admonishing them, and they accepted their admonitions and put them into practice. I watched them, and soon realized that the missionaries were praying the holy Rosary. The savages, meanwhile, had gathered around from all directions, making room for the missionaries as they passed through, and were responding nicely together to the prayer.

[Conclusion of the Dream Narrative]

After a while the Salesians came and stood in the midst of the surrounding throng, and knelt down. The savages laid their weapons at the feet of the missionaries, and knelt also. Of a sudden, one of the Salesians intoned [the hymn], "Praise Mary, Ye Faithful Tongues;" and all those throngs with one voice took up the song, singing it through in such unison and with such power that I woke up with a start.

[Conclusion of Don Bosco's Narration with Comments]

I had this dream four or five years ago (he spoke these words in 1876), and it made a deep impression on me, for I regarded it as a message from heaven. True, its specific meaning eluded me, but I understood that it had something to do with the foreign missions, a project which all along had been my fondest wish.

In the wake of this dream, I felt the old yearning of my heart stirring back to life again. But I could not possibly do much with it, especially since I was unable to learn what people were indicated by the characteristics I had observed in those savages.

[v] Comments on the *Documenti* Text of the Dream and on Its Final Editing in the *Biographical Memoirs*

As in the *Lemoyne Report*, so also in *Documenti*, there follows immediately a lengthy description (in the first person) of Don Bosco's attempts to identify the people and region imaged in the dream. Don Bosco, so we are told, after receiving the Argentine proposal and researching the matter in that light, came to the conclusion that it was the country of Patagonia and its inhabitants that he had seen.⁶⁷

The *Documenti* text of the dream, tessellated as it is with all the bits and pieces offered by the *Barberis* and *Lemoyne Reports*, is a good example of Lemoyne's method of compilation. He scrupulously interlaces, with appropriate editing, all available elements from his two sources, trying, not quite successfully, to achieve a "complete" and coherent narrative. Complete it may be in the sense that it uses all that the sources have to offer, but it is not coherent. For instance, there is the anomaly that the missionaries' work of evangelization is described before the latter have gained a foothold among the natives. Otherwise, Lemoyne's editorial work in *Documenti* is restricted to the minimum necessary of fitting the sources together. Beyond that, he interprets the "sling" (one of the weapons carried by the natives, according to the *Barberis Report*) as the "*bolos*"—which obviously assumes the decision for Argentina.

As for the *Biographical Memoirs*, A. Amadei transcribes the text of *Documenti* almost literally, and his editing is limited to punctuation and a few spellings. But he rewrites the description of the distant mountains encircling the plain, perhaps because the original description is obscure, or perhaps because it did not seem to fit the topography of Patagonia. Also he re-interprets the original "sling" (and the "*bolos*" of *Documenti*) as the "*lazo*", again in the light of subsequent events.

⁶⁷ Cf. notes 65 above, and 70 below, with related text.

3. Aftermath of the Dream

The story of the Argentine proposal and its acceptance by Don Bosco is too well known to need rehearsing here.⁶⁸ We may, however, note that Don Bosco did not wait to be told by Pope Pius IX that the time had come. "The missions in South America that he had already accepted and others that the Holy See had proposed to him" were part the "business of a spiritual nature" that brought Don Bosco to Rome in February 1875.⁶⁹ There is no detailed record of what was discussed in the audiences he had with Pius IX on Feb 22 and on March 12, 1875; but presumably the missions, to which Don Bosco had already committed himself, were on the agenda.

Furthermore, it is not clear at what point, after receiving the Argentine proposal and the pertinent data and information, Don Bosco interpreted his dream as referring to Patagonia. Apparently, besides providing verbal descriptions, Consul Gazzolo also showed Don Bosco some sketches of the Patagonian natives. But the natives described in the dream narrative do not really resemble any of the Patagonian types.⁷⁰ In any case, the identification was an *ex-post-facto* conclusion.

Part Three: The Two South American Dreams

I. The Second Missionary Dream (August 30, 1883)

1. The Struggle for the Establishment of the Patagonian Missions as Context of the Second Missionary Dream

[i] Don Bosco's Missionary Aims

⁶⁸ Cf. *EBM* X, p. 552-558; XI, p. 129-142.

⁶⁹ *EBM* XI, p. 98.

⁷⁰ In making this identification Don Bosco "was working out an instinctive and providential interpretation. We do not know what kind of drawings [of the natives] Gazzolo submitted to Don Bosco. But the savages described by Don Bosco resemble the images derived from encyclopedias a lot more than they resemble any real Patagonian type [...]. On the other hand, it is psychologically certain that dream images, always blurred, are interpreted only through elements of the dreamer's inner world. Besides, it can easily be ascertained that the pictures of Patagonian natives circulating at the time were really poor representations [...]. And furthermore, it can be shown that Don Bosco's geographical [missionary] dreams, like so many of his dreams, even at their origin, are rooted in daily-life experiences, heightened by the missionary fervor that possessed him." These are J. Belza's "appropriate comments," as quoted by J. Borrego, *Proyecto*, p. 47, note 157].

The official Argentine proposal was made and accepted without any reference to the evangelization of the native tribes of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. As a consequence of Consul Gazzolo's initiative, offers were made by Archbishop Frederick Aneyros (through his secretary Msgr. Mariano Espinosa) and by Fr. Peter Ceccarelli. But these offers concerned only the Italian church of Our Lady of Mercy in Buenos Aires and, some 160 miles northwest, a school in San Nicolás de los Arroyos. Don Bosco, however, was quick to see the specifically missionary possibilities of the proposal which responded to the missionary plans he had been forming and to the suggestions of his dream. Thus, in his exchanges with the Argentine parties he spoke only of the typical Salesian work for youth in parish, school and oratory, etc.⁷¹ On the contrary, in addressing the Salesians or the Holy See, he emphasized the missions proper. For instance, in a circular letter inviting Salesians to volunteer he writes:

Among the many proposals received for the establishment of a foreign mission, the one submitted by the Argentine Republic seemed preferable. In Argentina, beyond the regions already civilized, there are immense territories inhabited by savage populations. It is among these that, by the grace of God, the Salesians are called to exercise their zeal.⁷²

A plan for the evangelization of the native tribes is outlined in a memorandum to Card. Alexander Franchi, Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, in which Don Bosco speaks of the school of San Nicolás as a "seminary" and staging area for the mission:

The strategy that appeared to be most likely to succeed was to establish shelters, schools, hostels and educational institutes on the borderlands of the savages. Once contact was made with the children, it would be an easy step to contact their families, and so gain a foothold among the tribes of the savages. This city [San Nicolás] is situated a mere 60 miles from where the savages live. From this [vantage point] the Salesians would be able to study the language, the history and the customs of those peoples. It might even be possible to develop native missionary vocations from among the pupils. [...] It is called San Nicolás school, in order not to offend national sensibilities. But it is actually a seminary, that is, a school where missionary vocations are trained for work among the savages.⁷³

⁷¹ So, e.g., in letters to Fr. Ceccarelli of December 25, 1874 [*Ceria-Ep* II, p. 429], and to Archbishop Aneyros of November 15, 1875 [*Ceria-Ep* II, 519].

⁷² Circular letter of February 5, 1875, *Ceria-Ep* II, p. 451].

⁷³ ASC 131.01: Lettere Originali, Franchi, *FDBM* 23 A3-6 (autograph) and A7-10 (copy), *Ceria-Ep* III, p. 68-61.

[ii] Don Bosco's Complex Utopian Project

As far as Don Bosco was concerned the Argentinian proposal offered opportunities that went beyond the church in Buenos Aires and the school in San Nicolás. In the first place, the church and the school would provide a base for a great development of the Salesian work in Argentina and the whole of South America. Secondly, the taking over of a church serving a large community of Italian immigrants in Buenos Aires might be just a starting point in addressing that very problem, immigration, in a more radical way. Thirdly, from the San Nicolás base his missionaries could make contact with the native tribes without delay and begin the work of evangelization. Fourthly, he felt that this missionary engagement would earn the Church's official recognition of the Salesians as "apostolic missionaries," through the creation of Vicariates of Prefectures. These possibilities set Don Bosco's imagination whirring. He began to make plans that expressed these ideas and concerns.

In spite of his many commitments and of all he had on his mind at this time (mounting opposition from Archbishop Gastaldi, plans for the Sons of Mary and the Salesian Cooperators, etc.), Don Bosco became obsessed with his "Patagonian projects," and devoted much time and energy to articulate them for himself and for the authorities. To Fr. Cagliari he wrote that he was working on "a series of projects that would appear a madman's dreams to the eyes of the world."⁷⁴

A few days before that letter, in April of 1876, he had presented to the Italian Foreign Secretary a plan for the establishment of a colony of Italian immigrants. This colony would welcome Italian immigrants from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay, and would be established in the coastal area somewhere between the Río Negro and the Straits of Magellan—a region that was (so he thought) a kind of no-man's-land.⁷⁵ A little later, at the request of the Prefect of the Roman Congregation, a substantial essay on "Patagonia and the Southernmost Regions of the American Continent" was authored by Fr. Barberis and signed by Don Bosco with the date of August 20, 1876.⁷⁶ The conclusion of the work details new projects for the evangelization of Patagonia, based on suggestions received by Fr. Cagliari in Argentina. Each proposal would provide a base for the mission. The Archbishop of Buenos Aires was offering to the Salesians the parish of Carmen de Patagones at the mouth of the Río Negro. Fr. Cagliari and two Salesians had received the invitation to go and

⁷⁴ Don Bosco's letter to Fr. Cagliari of April 27, 1876, *Ceria-Ep* III, p. 52.

For a discussion of these "projects" and of Don Bosco's geographical knowledge of the regions of southern Argentina as of 1876, cf. Borrego, *Proyecto*.

⁷⁵ Memorandum of April 16, 1876, *Ceria-Ep* III, p. 44f; *IBM* XII, p. 623f., omitted in *EBM*.

⁷⁶ Of this work we now have a critical edition: *La Patagonia e le Terre Australi del Continente Americano*, Introducción y texto crítico por Jesús Borrego (Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano, 11). Roma: LAS, 1988.

live with two native tribes in Chubut. The Argentinian government, about to found a colony in Santa Cruz, was inviting the Salesians to provide religious service there. Don Bosco did not hesitate to give publicity to these plans in Catholic newspapers and in other ways. But these plans unfortunately came to nought. It would take three more years before the Salesians could establish a base at Carmen de Patagones in 1880, and initiate systematic missionary activity.⁷⁷

[iii] Playing for Time and Making Contact

Don Bosco's utopian projects had per force to come to terms with the harsh reality encountered by the missionaries in place. His missionary fervor and impatience had to be tempered likewise by the painful process involved in laying foundations and gaining entry. The missionaries, following Archbishop Aneyros' advice, concentrated first on securing a solid foothold in Buenos Aires, and then in organizing the Salesian work and the Salesian cadres in the Plata triangle (Buenos Aires, Montevideo, San Nicolás). They put into action the Salesian pastoral strategies and the educational system of Don Bosco in parish and school, while awaiting the call.

The call came in April 1879 in the form of a military expedition mounted by the War Ministry, the purpose of which was to stem once and for all the natives' incursions, and to extend the frontiers southward so as to secure the whole of Patagonia for Argentina against Chilean claims. Msgr. Mariano Espinosa, Vicar General of Buenos Aires, Fr. James Costamagna and Salesian seminarian Louis Botta, accompanied the expedition as chaplains. They met the natives at Carhué (Alsina) and at Choele-Choel, the "gateway to Patagonia." Carefully kept abreast of events, Don Bosco wrote to the Holy See, not without a note of triumph:

On this very day, April 20, 1879, three Salesian missionaries, accompanying an expedition led by the Minister of War, are headed for the territory of the Pampas Indios. Their purpose is to rescue the greatest possible number of those children who appear doomed to slaughter by the policies of the Argentine government."⁷⁸

Contact with the natives was made at Choele-Choel; and the trip ended at Carmen de Patagones and Viedma at the mouth of the Río Negro, where Fr. Costamagna preached a mission. By a letter of August 15, 1879, the Vincentians having resigned from Patagones, Archbishop Aneyros entrusted that parish and mission to the Salesians. On February 2, 1880, Fr. Fagnano was installed as

⁷⁷ Cf. Borrego, *Proyecto*, p. 61-67.

⁷⁸ Don Bosco's letter of April 20, 1879, *Ceria-Ep* III, p. 470f.

pastor of Patagones, and a few months later, Fr. Emil Rizzo was assigned to Our Lady of Mercy in Viedma, the future seat of the Vicariate.⁷⁹

[iv] Seeking Official Recognition and the Establishment of Vicariates /
Prefectures

Having realized this first stage of the "project," Don Bosco set himself to the task of obtaining from the Holy See official recognition of the missionary activity of the Society. This would mean obtaining the erection of Vicariates or Prefectures, which action by the Holy See would confer "apostolic" status on the Salesian work in Patagonia. Don Bosco attached the utmost importance to this official stamp of approval, to the point that this further aspect of the "project" became an all-engrossing preoccupation. He practically came to regard its successful completion as a vindication of the Salesian Society and its mission.⁸⁰

Between 1876 and 1883 numerous exchanges and negotiations took place to that effect. In the above-quoted memorandum to Card. Franchi, after laying out his strategy for the evangelization of the native tribes out of San Nicolás, Don Bosco adds:

I humbly ask your Eminence: [...] 3^o to create a Prefecture Apostolic which might exercise ecclesiastical authority over the natives of the Pampas and of Patagonia, who up to now have not been subject to any diocesan Ordinary nor to any civilized government.⁸¹

In a subsequent memorandum to the same Prefect, Don Bosco suggested the erection of a Prefecture Apostolic at Carhué and of a Vicariate at Santa Cruz.⁸²

⁷⁹ Cf. J. Borrego, "Il primo iter missionario nel progetto di Don Bosco e nell'esperienza concreta di Don Cagliari," in *Missioni Salesiane 1875-1975*, a cura di Pietro Scotti. Roma: LAS, 1977, p. 78-85.

⁸⁰ Don Bosco wrote to Fr. Costamagna, who had meanwhile succeeded the deceased Fr. Bodrato as provincial: "Obtaining the erection of a Prefecture or of a Vicariate Apostolic in Patagonia is of the utmost importance. The Holy Father wants it and is urging it. It is also advantageous to us; for without this [official commissioning] we shall not have the support of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, nor that of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons, nor that of the Holy Childhood. It seems that neither Fr. Bodrato nor you yourself have been aware of the importance of this project" [Letter of January 31, 1881, *Ceria-Ep* IV, p. 7].

Likewise to Fr. Fagnano: "The mission of Patagonia is our Congregation's greatest undertaking. You will be told everything in due time. But I must warn you at once that great responsibilities are being placed on you. God's help, however, will not be wanting" [Letter of January 31, 1881, *Ceria-Ep* IV, p. 14.].

⁸¹ Cf. note 73 above.

⁸² Cf. letter of December 31, 1877, *Ceria-Ep* III, p. 256-261.

On the other hand, in a letter to Cardinal John Simeoni, newly appointed Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Don Bosco proposed the creation of a Vicariate or of a Prefecture at Patagones, "where two well known chiefs are asking for our missionaries, with assurances of help and protection."⁸³ Cardinal Gaetano Alimonda, the Archbishop of Turin, and Mgr. Dominic Jacobini were delegated to study the proposal. Of this phase of the negotiations Don Bosco wrote to Pope Leo XIII:

In obedience to Your Holiness' command, I have had a long conference with His Eminence Card. Alimonda and with the Most Reverend Msgr. Jacobini. [...] It was a common point of agreement that a Vicariate Apostolic should be erected for the colonies [missions] established on the Río Negro, and that a seminary to train evangelical workers should be founded in Europe.⁸⁴

Don Bosco's "definitive" proposal was made, after further consultations and negotiations, in a laboriously worded memorandum to Cardinal Simeoni, on July 29, 1883. This proposal was for three Vicariates and/or Prefectures. Don Bosco suggested the immediate erection of a Vicariate for northern Patagonia with seat at Patagones, and a Prefecture for southern Patagonia. Central Patagonia, still undeveloped and "wholly under Protestant control," would be under the patronage of the northern Vicariate, until a separate Vicariate could be established there. Similarly, the southern Prefecture would remain under the general patronage of the northern Vicariate, unless the Holy Father decided to make it an independent Vicariate. Requested to nominate candidates for these posts, Don Bosco submitted the names of Fr. Cagliero or Fr. Costamagna for the northern (and central) Vicariate, and Fr. Fagnano, for southern Patagonia. Don Bosco commended the three as "strong, hard-working men, good preachers, inured to toil, and of unimpeachable moral character." Fr. Fagnano, was further commended as particularly suitable for southern Patagonia—"a man of powerful physique and defiant of toil and danger."⁸⁵

⁸³ Letter of March 1878, *Ceria-Ep III*, p. 320f.

In this letter Don Bosco also declares his willingness to prepare missionaries "for the Vicariate of Mangalor, India, or some other mission."

⁸⁴ Letter of April 13, 1880, *Ceria-Ep III*, p. 567f.

In the detailed "Memorandum on the Salesian Missions" attached to this letter, Don Bosco pointed out that the Argentine government had just created the Province of Patagonia, and suggested that the Vicariate might well take the same name and cover the same territory, and include all the lands to the east of the mountains, "until another Vicariate is erected at Santa Cruz" [*Ceria-Ep III*, p. 472f.].

⁸⁵ Cf. *Ceria-Ep IV*, p. 225-227.

John Cagliero (1838-1926), one of the early followers of Don Bosco, was ordained a priest in 1862, and led the first band of 10 Salesian missionaries to South America, where as Don Bosco's vicar from the start, he headed the Salesian work and guided its development through the length and breadth of the continent. He was

The above took place at the end of July 1883. A few days before, the Salesian work had been established in Niterói (Brazil).⁸⁶ One month later, the Third General Chapter convened and held its preparatory spiritual retreat at San Benigno. "The missions" were represented by Fr. Cagliero and Fr. Costamagna,⁸⁷ and must have been a lively topic of conversation. The two missionaries must have created a stir by their reports; and Don Bosco himself doubtlessly fanned the flames by expatiating on the great project and on his future plans. In this climate, as he, anxiously and with high hopes, awaited the impending fateful decision of the Holy See, on the last day of the retreat he had a dream—the Second Missionary Dream.

2. Textual Tradition and Text of the Second Missionary Dream

The second Mission Dream took place at San Benigno, at the end of the spiritual retreat preparatory to the Third General Chapter, on the night preceding the feast of St. Rose of Lima, hence on the night of August 30, 1883.⁸⁸ It was narrated by Don Bosco to the members of the Third General Chapter, meeting at Valsalice, five days later, during the morning session of September 4. In some

appointed Vicar of Northern Patagonia in October, and ordained bishop on December 7, 1884. He was made a cardinal by Pope Benedict XV in 1915.

James Costamagna (1846-1921) was ordained a priest in 1868 and served as local director of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from 1875-1877. He led the third missionary party in 1877, and was among the three missionaries who accompanied General Roca's military expedition in 1879 and made contact with the Araucan natives on the Río Negro. In 1880 he succeeded the deceased Fr. Bodrato as director of the San Carlos school in Buenos Aires, and as provincial he founded the Salesian work in Chile in 1887. Nominated Vicar Apostolic of Méndes y Gualaquiza (Ecuador), he was ordained bishop on May 23, 1895. While awaiting the opportunity to enter his Vicariate, he acted as Fr. Rua's representative for the Salesian works on the Pacific side. He was permitted to visit Ecuador briefly in 1902, and then allowed to enter his Vicariate permanently in 1912.

Joseph Fagnano (1844-1916) was ordained in 1868 and was a last-hour substitute member of the first missionary group in 1875. He served as director of the school of San Nicolás, and in 1879 he was named pastor of the parish of Patagones, whence his true missionary career was launched. In November 1883 he was appointed Prefect Apostolic of southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Having established a base at Punta Arenas in mid-1887, the indomitable Fr. Fagnano set about evangelizing the natives and founded missions in Tierra del Fuego.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Annali* I, p. 457-460.

⁸⁷ Cf. ASC 04: Capitoli Generali presieduti da D. Bosco, *FDBM* 1,863 E7—where the official list of participants (35 in number) is given.

⁸⁸ The feast of St. Rose of Lima fell on August 31. The memorial is now kept on August 23.

of the manuscripts, it bears the title, *The American Missions or The Great Gathering at the Equator*.

This lengthy dream narrative tells of a gathering at a great hall located in the equatorial region of South America, and following this, of a train journey southward down the length of South America to the Straits of Magellan, along the eastern slope of the Andes, in which Don Bosco, accompanied by an interpreter, is shown “the harvest entrusted to the Salesians.” This is followed, in one tradition of the text, by a journey northward, by another route, back to the point of departure.

[i] Textual History

A number of archival documents, namely, Viglietti’s chronicle, the minutes of the Third General Chapter, and Lemoyne’s reports (one of them reviewed by Don Bosco) allow us to reconstruct the textual history of this dream. In the present archival situation, Lemoyne remains our principal source.

[Viglietti’s Alleged Draft]

In a short biographical introduction to the good copy of his transcribed chronicle, Charles Viglietti, states that on the morning of August 31, in San Benigno, Don Bosco called him to his room and had him put this dream down in writing under dictation, so that he might “read it” to the members of the General Chapter.⁸⁹ This report is not found in the archives; and one wonders what may have happened to it and whether Don Bosco actually read the dream as reported in Viglietti’s script. If so, did Lemoyne obtain and use that script for his own report? We have no way of telling.

⁸⁹ Carlo Maria Viglietti (1864-1915) served as Don Bosco’s secretary from 1884 up to the Saint’s death. He was ordained on December 18, 1886. At Fr. Lemoyne’s request, he kept a chronicle beginning with May 20, 1884. He produced a first draft chronicle, which he later transcribed into good copy.

In a three-page introduction to his transcribed chronicle, Viglietti recounts how Don Bosco, in August 1882, chose him, still a novice, as an errand boy. He then goes on to describe how, in November 1883, Don Bosco asked him (still a student of philosophy, although already perpetually professed) to be his secretary and serve him as the “*baculus senectutis meae*” (the support of my old age).

In his introduction, Viglietti writes on the subject of this dream: “One morning in 1883, the [feast] day of St. Rose of Lima, Don Bosco, no sooner out of bed, called me to his room and dictated to me a beautiful dream which he had had that night and which concerned our missions in [South] America. That dream was read a few days later at the General Chapter, meeting at Valsalice” [ASC 110: Chronachette, Viglietti, “Memorie”, *FDBM* 1,232 C6].

[Lemoyne A]

In the present archival situation, our primary source for the text of this dream is Fr. Lemoyne, who was a member of the Third General Chapter.⁹⁰ Presumably, he heard the narration and drafted a first-hand report (here referred to as *Lemoyne A*). *Lemoyne A* is a 12-page narrative in Lemoyne's hand, with marginal notes by the same. It tells of the gathering in the great hall, and relates the journey southward ending at Punta Arenas (with a conclusion of the dream and the awakening); but it does not speak of a return journey back to the starting point.⁹¹

[Lemoyne B]

Subsequently, Lemoyne (on the basis of *Lemoyne A*) drafted a second report which he submitted to Don Bosco for his revision and corrections (here designated as *Lemoyne B-Main Narration*). We have here also a 12-page narrative, in Lemoyne's hand, relating the scene in the great hall and the train journey southward ending at Punta Arenas, with a conclusion of the dream and the awakening but again without a reference to the return journey. A number of marginal additions and interlinear corrections in Don Bosco's hand appear through the first part of this draft. One large marginal addition of over 250 words near the beginning reports a conversation heard by Don Bosco in the hall. There are also further marginal notes by Lemoyne. These notes, at times mere jottings, should be regarded as later additions, probably written in at the same time as *Appendix X* (to be discussed below) and bearing no sign of Don Bosco's revision.

Lemoyne B-Main Narration is followed immediately by an 4-page appendix in Lemoyne's hand, with his own marginal notes, but none by Don Bosco (here designated as *Lemoyne B-Appendix X*). This appendix is marked with an X, which corresponds to an earlier X placed at the end of the *Main Narration*, before the conclusion.⁹²

Obviously, *Lemoyne B-Main Narration*, having been authenticated by Don Bosco, should be regarded as the representative text of the dream.⁹³ The status of *Lemoyne B-Appendix X* is uncertain. Clearly it was not part of Don Bosco's original narration to the General Chapter; and it gives no indication of having come under Don Bosco's scrutiny. Therefore it stands only on Lemoyne's authority, just as do Lemoyne's above-mentioned marginal notes. It is

⁹⁰ Fr. Lemoyne's name appears among the 35 members of the Third General Chapter listed in the minutes [cf. ASC 04: Capitoli Generali presieduti da Don Bosco, *FDBM* 1,863 E7].

⁹¹ *Lemoyne A* is in ASC 132: Autografi-Sogni, *FDBM* 1,347 B10-C9.

⁹² *Lemoyne B-Main Narration* is in ASC 132: Autografi-Sogni, *FDBM* 1,347 A6-B5; followed immediately by *Lemoyne B-Appendix X*, *FDBM* 1,347 B6-9.

⁹³ In a letter to Fr. Costamagna dated November 12, 1883 (hence, some two months after the narration) Don Bosco writes: "Fr. Lemoyne's [narrative of the] dream still needs some corrections, but you shall [eventually] get it" [*Ceria-Ep* IV, p. 241].

conceivable that, upon inquiry by Lemoyne, Don Bosco spoke of a return journey, indicating how the narrative should be completed, and that he also may have supplied the further details incorporated in the marginal notes.⁹⁴ This is essentially Cecilia Romero's judgment. In her "critical" edition she transcribes *Lemoyne B-Main Narration* and *Appendix X* in the sequence given in the archival document. Further, she incorporates all of Don Bosco's additions and corrections. But she leaves Lemoyne's notes in the margin, also because in most cases they are not grammatically and logically tied to specific points in the text.⁹⁵ We will do the same.

[*Lemoyne C and Derivatives*]

At a further editorial stage, Lemoyne then proceeded to compile a "definitive" text. He edited *Lemoyne B*, by bringing *Appendix X* into its logical sequence with the *Main Narration*, and by integrating all marginal notes into the text. Thus a "complete and coherent" narrative, with some editing, was achieved (here designated as *Lemoyne C*).⁹⁶

Lemoyne C, with superficial editing, is the text transcribed by Lemoyne in *Documenti*. The *Documenti* text then is brought into the *Biographical Memoirs* with some further editing by E. Ceria.⁹⁷

[*GC 3 Minutes*]

We have described the line of textual tradition as based totally, failing the above-mentioned Viglietti draft, on the *Lemoyne Reports* and Lemoyne's editorial work. And we have also indicated that *Lemoyne B*, as reviewed by Don Bosco, should be regarded as the chief source text. But a further question arises. Do not the minutes of the Third General Chapter carry a record of Don Bosco's dream as he told it at the morning session of September 4? Indeed they do. But the account (here designated as *GC 3 Minutes*) is sketchy and spotty, a mere two pages of jottings and hasty notes. Yet it does clearly reveal the structure and the shape of the original narration, and it helps answer some of the questions raised by later editorial work.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ E. Ceria states that all additions and modifications were authorized by Don Bosco [cf. *IBM XVI*, p. 383]. It seems best, however, not to apply this principle indiscriminately; in our case, at least, we should recognize the different degrees of authentication.

⁹⁵ Romero, *Sogni*, p.81-93.

It is to be noted that Romero does not refer to Viglietti's claim, nor does she comment on the *GC 3 Minutes* report, to be discussed below.

⁹⁶ *Lemoyne C* is in *ASC 111*: *Sogni*, *FDBM* 1,318 D7-E12+1,319 A1-9.

⁹⁷ *Documenti XXVI* [c. 37], p. 525-534, in *ASC 110*: *Cronachette*, *Lemoyne-Doc*, *FDBM* 1,089 E11f+1,090 A1-8. *IBM XVI*, p. 385-394.

⁹⁸ *GC 3 Minutes* report is in *ASC 04*: *Capitoli Generali presieduti da Don Bosco*, III Cap. Gen. (1883), *FDBM* 1,863 E12+1,864 A1.

It should be borne in mind that at the time of *GC 3* (September 1-7, 1883) Fr. Lemoyne, though present at the Chapter, had not yet been appointed general secretary. The minutes, such as they are, were compiled by Fr. John Marengo [cf. *IBM*

[ii] Text of the Second Missionary Dream

In view of this, before presenting the text of the dream according to *Lemoyne B*, I give here also that of *GC 3 Minutes* in literal translation. My editing will be limited to supplementing the total lack of punctuation, the omission of speaker designations in dialogue, faulty sentence structure, and similar deficiencies—for the sake of obtaining a readable text.

The few additions occurring in the margin of the narrative and at its conclusion are inserted into the main text in *italics*.

(1) The Text of the Dream According the *GC 3 Minutes*

September 4 — Morning Session

At 9 o'clock we all gathered in the chapter room. Don Bosco opened the conference with the usual prayers.

[He told us] that he had a dream to relate.

[Dream Setting]

On the night preceding the feast of St. Rose of Lima, he dreamt that he was running and felt exhausted. [After a while] he seemed to be in a reception hall.

[Act I: In the Reception Hall]

[There were people there,] and the conversation turned to the subject of Congregation. I inquired [of one in particular] where I was and with whom I was speaking. (*He was a layperson.*)

He said: "Speak with all freedom and confidence. I am a friend of yours and of your Salesians.

[Scene 1: The Allegory of the Rope]

Then he went on: "I would like to give you a little task to perform. Come to this table, and pull on this rope."

I began to pull; and I saw that the N^o 0 marked the tip of the rope. I pulled some more, and out came the number 1.

"Pull all of it out," he told me, "and roll it into a big ball as you pull."

XVI, p. 412]. As a whole the archival copy of the minutes appears to be a transcription of the original notes. But the dream narrative itself (in a different handwriting?) is too poor to be a transcription, and exhibits all the characteristics of an original, unedited draft.

[I pulled some more, and out came] the number 20. "Is this enough?" I asked.

"No, keep on pulling." I pulled and got as far as the number 47, where I met with a large knot. Beyond it, the rope continued, but as small strands.

Then he said: " $47 + 3 + 5 = 55$. In there any more?"

"No, it's the end."

"Then, turn around, and pull the rope in the opposite direction."

I pulled until I reached the number 10.

"Keep on pulling," he told me.

"It's the end of the rope. There is water, but beyond that there is nothing."

"Now," he concluded, "if you add together 55 and 10, you get 65. You must line up all the segments into one single rope."

[Then he continued: "Look about you. What do you see?"] "I see mountains to the west," I replied.

"Those mountains serve as a barrier," he said. "As far as that lies the harvest destined for the Salesians. The people who await the Salesians are not few; they number in the thousands and in the millions."

[Scene 2: The Allegory of the Figs]

Meanwhile Fr. Lago came on the scene, carrying a basket full of small, green figs.⁹⁹

"What are you bringing me?" I asked. "These figs are not ripe."

The first [Interpreter] took the figs and said: "Here is a gift for you. These figs are not ripe, but they belong nevertheless to the fig tree of life. You must try to bring them to maturity.

"But how?" I asked.

"You have to try to reattach them to the parent tree." [He reflected:] "*With difficulty will the people of the present [generation] learn the Christian way of life. Not so their children. They will come [to be evangelized] with the best of dispositions.*"

"But this will take a long time!" I objected.

But he replied: "It will be accomplished before the end of the second generation."

"How long is this from now?" I asked.

He explained: "Beginning not with this generation, but with the next."

"But how long must one allow for one generation?"

"Sixty years," he said.

⁹⁹ Angelo Lago (1834-1914), a pharmacist from Peveragno (Cuneo, Italy) became a Salesian and was ordained in 1877. He worked in Fr. Rua's office practically until his death.

[Act II: The Train Journey Southward]

Then he took me [to a railway station] to catch a train.

[Scene 1: First Stage of the Journey]

“Where are we going?” I asked.

“[South] along the Cordilleras,” he replied. [And as we were traveling he said:]. From here [eastward] to the sea [is also your mission field]” He showed me to one side the diocese of Cartagena.” But I could not understand what he was telling me.

At a certain point [the train came to a stop; passengers] got off, and some of them crossed the Cordilleras [over to the western side].

[Scene 2: to the Land of Magellan]

Then, on again till we got to the land of Magellan.

“And now,” [I inquired looking at what was going on about me]. “Tell me what all this means?”

“What you see here,” he explained “is now only at the development stage.” Then he mused: “The savages will become so tractable as to come of their own account to receive instruction. The [...]”

“Now take me to see our Salesians,” I said.

“Yes, [come].” We went. The Salesians were numerous, but there was not one that I knew.

[When asked if they knew me, they replied] “Ah yes! Don Bosco. We have seen your pictures.”

“Where are Fr. Costamagna and Fr. [...],” I insisted?

“Ah!,” they answered. “Those were the first Salesians to come to these parts.”

[Conclusion]

[I was thinking] “Is this a dream or what?”

At that point Quirino woke him up by ringing the bells.

[Additional Notes: Words of the Narrator]

We travelled along the banks of the Uruguay, which is a very long river.

The small strands represent the chains of small islands and the settlements beyond the Straits [of Magellan] which are to be part of the one single rope.

(2) Comments on GC 3 Minutes

With regard to this sparing and unedited account, taken directly from the narration, the following should be noted: (1) While giving a substantial, though

fairly brief, description of the two allegorical episodes of the rope and of the figs in the reception hall, it gives no details at all of the conversation heard, merely noting that it was on "the subject of the Congregation." (2) The Interpreter is not named and is described only as a layperson. (3) The train journey to the south is in two stages only, with one stop to let passengers off. (4) No reference is made to the geographical features, to the mineral riches, and to the populations of the Andes. (5) The scene at the Straits of Magellan (given in briefest fashion) closes the narrative; no return journey is described.

(3) The Text of the Dream According to *Lemoyne B* (Main Narration and Appendix X)]¹⁰⁰

(The notes and corrections in Don Bosco's hand are inserted in *italics* into the main body of the text The Lemoyne notes are left in the margin at the place where they occur in the Ms.)

[Introduction by the Narrator]

On the night preceding the feast of St. Rose of Lime (August 30) I had a dream. Somehow I was conscious of being asleep. At the same time I seemed to be running hard, which exhausted me to the point that I was unable to speak, write, and work at my usual occupations.

[Dream Setting: In the Reception Hall]

As I was considering whether this was dream or reality, I seemed to be entering a reception hall where many people were conversing on various subjects.¹⁰¹

A prolonged conversation ensued on the fact that a great number of savages in Australia, in India, in China, in Africa, and particularly in America, are still shrouded in the shadow of death. One speaker remarked:

"Europe, Christian Europe, the great teacher of civilized living and of the Catholic faith, seems to have grown apathetic with regard to the Foreign Missions. Few have the courage to brave long voyages or unknown [lands] to save the souls of those millions of souls [sic] that were nonetheless redeemed by the Son of God, Jesus Christ."

¹⁰⁰ This is a translation of *Lemoyne B* as edited in Romero, *Sogni*.

¹⁰¹ The portion of text in *italics* that follows is Don Bosco's long marginal addition, already mentioned.

In dreams "auditions" and conversations are not unusual; but this conversation is very unusual for its length and logical complexity.

All other marginal and interlinear corrections or additions by Don Bosco deal with small detail. The important consideration is that Don Bosco reviewed this text.

Another speaker added:

"How many idol-worshippers lead unhappy lives outside the Church, deprived of the knowledge of the Gospel in America alone! People think (and geographers make the same mistake) that the American Cordilleras are like a wall that divides that part of the world in two. But it is not so. Those long and high mountain ranges are crossed by valleys that are more than one thousand kilometers long. Within them are forests as yet unexplored; [rare] plants, animals, and [precious] stones [so rare] that [they] are scarce [even] there [sic]. Coal, petroleum, lead, copper, iron, silver and gold lie buried in those mountains, where the Creator's almighty hand placed them for people's benefit. Oh cordillera, Cordilleras, [sic] how rich are your eastern slopes!"

At that moment I felt the urge to seek an explanation on a number of subjects, and to find out who those people were, and where I was. But I thought: "Before opening my mouth I ought to see what kind of people these are!" And so I looked around to investigate, but I recognized no one. Meanwhile, as if they had only noticed me at that very moment, they invited me to join them, and they received me kindly.

Then I inquired: "Where are we? Are we in Turin, London, Madrid or Paris? And who are you?" But the gentlemen dodged my questions and continued their discourse on the Missions.

[Act I: Allegorical Actions in the Reception Hall]

At that moment a young man of ravishing beauty, radiating light brighter than the sun, who appeared to be about sixteen years of age, came up to me. His clothes were splendidly embroidered; he wore a crown-like adornment on his head which was set with sparkling jewels. He looked at me kindly, and seemed to be interested in me in a special way. His smile expressed ineffable love. He spoke my name, took me by the hand, and began to speak about the Salesian Congregation.

At a certain point I interjected: "Whom have I the honor of speaking with? Please tell me your name."

The young man replied: "Have no fear! Speak freely, for you are with a friend."

"But what is your name?"

I would gladly tell you my name, but it isn't necessary. You should know who I am."

Then I looked more intently at that radiant face. How beautiful it was! Immediately I recognized him as the son of Count Colle, the illustrious benefactor of all our houses, and especially of our [South] American missions.¹⁰² "Oh, it's you," I said, speaking his name. "And who are all these gentlemen?"

¹⁰² In a number of dreams Don Bosco is guided by an Interpreter. For example, Dominic Savio fills this role in the Lanzo Dream of 1876. Here the

“These are friends of the Salesians; and I, as a friend of yours and of your Salesians, *and in God's name*, would like to give you a small task to perform.”

[Scene 1: Acted Allegory: The Numbered Rope]

“What kind of task? What's this all about?”

“Come up to this table, and pull down on this rope.” There was a table in the middle of the *great hall*, and on this table was a rope coiled up into a ball. I observed that this rope was scored with lines like a ruler. Later I realized that the hall was located in South America, right at the equator, and that the numbers on the rope represented the degrees of the *earth's latitude*. So, I grasped the end of the rope, and as I looked at it I saw the number 0 marked on it. I began to laugh.

Interpreter is Louis Colle, the son of Count Louis Antoine Fleury Colle of Toulon, France. In March 1885, Don Bosco visited the young man as he lay dying of consumption. He died on April 3 at the age of 17. Don Bosco thought so highly of Louis, (and of his great benefactors, the Count and Countess Colle) that a short time later, with the help of Fr. de Barruel, he wrote and published a biography dedicated “À Monsieur et à Madame Colle”: *Biographie du jeune Louis Fleury Antoine Colle* [sic] par Jean Bosco prêtre. Turin: typ. de l'Oratoire, 1882 [Cf. *EBM* XV, p. 57-59]. Was Louis to be the new Dominic Savio?

Be that as it may, the identity of the Interpreter-Guide, as presented in the sources of this dream, is problematic. In the *GC3 Minutes* he is simply a “layperson.” In *Lemoyne A* (up to page 4 of the main text), the Interpreter is described as “a gentleman” (*un personaggio*), “a man” (*un uomo*), “that man” (*quell'uomo*). But Lemoyne's later marginal notes from page 2 on, already specify that he was a young man (*un giovane*), subsequently identified as “the son of the Counts Colli” [sic]. Then from page 4 on, Lemoyne systematically deletes the original designations (such as “that man”) replacing them with expressions like, “that young man”, “that dear young man.” It appears, therefore, that in the original narration Don Bosco had not identified the Interpreter as young Louis Colle. In *Lemoyne B*, which (as mentioned above) is a re-working of the text by Lemoyne reviewed by Don Bosco, the Interpreter is identified as young Louis Colle from the start.

In this respect, it is significant that Don Bosco on other occasions spoke of Louis Colle's appearing to him in the missionary dreams and in other contexts [cf. *EBM* XV, 59-70]. Specifically, with reference to this Second Missionary Dream, in a letter to Count Colle dated February 11, 1884, he speaks of Louis as his guide: “The trip I took in our dear Louis' company is becoming clearer day by day” [*Ceria-Ep* IV, p. 501]. He does the same with reference to the Fourth Missionary Dream in letters to Count and Countess Colle dated August 10, 1885 and January 15, 1886 [*Ceria-Ep* IV, 516 and 521], where he mentions a “stroll” he took with Louis to Central Africa and China. It should be noted, however, that, as our documents stand, in the Fourth Missionary Dream Louis Colle merely appears among those who urge Don Bosco on, not as an interpreter-guide. In the Third Missionary Dream, there is an unidentified Interpreter; but Louis Colle appears only toward the end among the blessed.

"This is no laughing matter," the angelic youth said to me. "Observe, and tell me what you see written on the rope."

"The number 0."

"Pull on the rope a bit." I pulled, and out came the number 1.

"Pull some more, and coil the rope as you pull." I pulled, and out came the numbers 2, 3, 4, up to 20.

"Is this enough?" I asked him.

"No," the young man replied. "Pull farther. Pull till you find a knot." I pulled till I reached the number 47 and, after it, a large knot. The rope extended beyond that point, but divided into many smaller cords which radiated out toward the east, the west, and the south.

"Is this enough?" I asked him.

"What is the number?" he inquired in turn.

"The number is 47."

"And what does 47 plus 3 make?"

"50!"

"And 50 plus 5?"

"55!"

"Watch carefully: fifty-five," he said, and added: "Pull some more!"

"I have reached the end!"

"Well, then, turn around, and pull the rope in the opposite direction." I pulled on the rope in that direction till I reached the number 10.

"Pull some more," said the young man.

"There is no more!"

"So, there is no more. Then, look farther. What do you see?"

"It's water," I replied. At that moment I had an experience so strange as to defy all explanation. I was standing in that room, was pulling on that rope, and yet at the same time I had a bird's eye view of a vast panorama which was unfolding before my very eyes, and which stretched out along the full extent of the rope.

It seems that the point 47 represents the starting place of the Salesian center from which to reach out to the Falkland Islands and the Tierra del Fuego, and other islands of those farthest lands [*sic*] in [South] America.¹⁰³

I saw in concentration all that I later saw in detail. The degrees on the rope where the clues that helped me memorize successive points visited on the journey.

From the first number 0 to number 47 there stretched a limitless land which was bounded *at its end* by straits of ocean and then broke up into hundreds of islands, *of which one was much larger than the others*. To these islands apparently *pointed* the little cords that radiated from the large knot. Each little cord ended at an island. Some of these were inhabited by natives in fairly large numbers; other islands appeared sterile, stark, rocky, and uninhabited; yet others were entirely capped with ice. To the west [were] numerous clusters of islands inhabited by savages in large numbers.

At the opposite end, that is, from number 0 to number 10, stretched more of the same country: and it ended in that [body of] water seen last of all. That [body of] water was (*so it appeared*) the sea of the Antilles. There it lay before my eyes in a manner I find totally inexplicable.¹⁰⁴

After my reply, "It's water!" the young man continued: "Now add 55 and 10. What does that add up to?"

I replied: "It adds up to 65."

"Now put everything together, and you have one [unbroken stretch of] rope.

"What happens now?"

"What do you see on this side?"

"To the west I see very high mountains; and to the east, the ocean."

"Excellent! These mountains constitute a bank, a boundary. From the mountains to the ocean lies the harvest entrusted to the Salesians. These

¹⁰³ This Lemoyne note locates a Salesian center at the 47th degree of latitude south. Actually there is no Salesian center at that location. Santa Cruz, which may historically be regarded as the staging base of Msgr. Fagnano's future mission, is located at about the 50th degree of latitude south. Ushuaia, the future southernmost Salesian foundation, is located at about the 55th.

¹⁰⁴ In a (later) note at the end of the dream narrative, Lemoyne states that the bishop of San José, Costa Rica, had requested the Salesians by letter of September 15, 1883. This city is located at the 10th degree of latitude north. (The Salesian work in San José began in 1933.)

thousands and millions of people are waiting for your help, *waiting for the faith.*" Those mountains were the Cordilleras of South America.

[Scene 2: The Allegory of Unripe Figs]

"But how are we to do this?" I rejoined.

"How? Look." Immediately Fr. Lago appeared on the scene carrying a basket of small, green figs.

"Here, Don Bosco, take this," he said to me.

"What have you got there?"

"[Figs.] I was told to bring them to you."

"But these figs are not fit to eat. They are not yet ripe."

Then the young man took up the basket, which was wide but not very deep. He offered it to me with the words, "This is the present he is giving you."

"And what am I to do with these figs?"

"These figs are not ripe yet, but they are nonetheless the fruit of the great fig tree of life. It is up to you to bring them to maturity."

"How? If they were larger, they could be made to ripen on straw like other of fruit. But these are so small, so green! That would be impossible."

"There is more to it than that. You should know that for these figs to ripen you have to re-attach them to the tree."

"How? That's impossible."

"Then watch. Saying this, the young man took a fig and dipped it first in a small bowl of blood, and next in a little bowl of water. Then he explained: "By sweat and by blood will the savages be returned to the tree and be made pleasing to the Lord of life."

I was thinking to myself: This will require a lot of time. Instead I turned to the dear young man I said: "I just don't know what to say."

The youth replied: "All this will be accomplished before the end of the second generation."

"What second generation?"

"Not counting the present generation—two generations from now."

I was thoroughly confused, and could only stammer: "How many years to each of these generations?"

"Sixty years."

"And after that, what?"

"Do you want to know what lies in the future? Come and see."

[Act II: The Railway Journey Southward]

Without knowing how, I found myself at a railway station, where a lot of people had gathered. We boarded a train. I wanted to know where we were.

The young man replied: "Look and pay close attention. We are going to travel along the Cordilleras. But the road is open to you also to the east, as far as the ocean. It is another gift from the Lord."

“And when shall we go to Boston? They are awaiting us there.”¹⁰⁵

“In its own good time.” And so saying he took out a map.

“What is that?” I asked. He answered by unfolding the map. On it the diocese of Cartagena was shown on a large scale and in high relief. (Was that to be our starting point?)¹⁰⁶

[Scene 1: First Stage of the Journey]

As I looked at the map, I heard the train whistle and observed that the train had started. During the trip my friend did most of the talking, but I was unable to follow him very well because of the noise the train was making. Nevertheless, I learnt new and wonderful things pertaining to astronomy and navigation; and about the mineral resources, the fauna and flora of those lands. On these subjects he spoke with eloquence and precision. From the very beginning he held my hand and continued to hold it in friendly manner until the end of the dream. Occasionally I would lay my [free] hand on his, but it seemed to vanish under my touch, so that my left hand would only find my right. The young man only smiled at this futile attempt of mine.¹⁰⁷

I kept looking out the window and watched the ever-changing and amazing landscape filing by: forests, mountains, plains, very large and majestic rivers, which even so far upstream were far larger than I had thought. We traveled along the edge of a virgin forest, as yet unexplored, for over a thousand miles. My power to see was intensified in such a marvelous manner, that it seemed able to penetrate those regions at will. It could not only peer into the Cordilleras, but it could also see through the isolated mountain ranges rising above those interminable plains (Brazil?).

¹⁰⁵ A proposal to establish a Salesian presence in Boston had been received, through intermediaries, toward the end of 1882. The first Salesian work in Boston (the Don Bosco Technical High School) was established in 1945.

¹⁰⁶ The city of Cartagena (Colombia), like San José (Costa Rica), is located at about the 10th degree of latitude north. But at the beginning of the dream narrative the reception hall is said to be located at the equator [cf. p. 48 above].

¹⁰⁷ A similar experience of the insubstantial nature of heavenly apparitions is described, with additional elaborate explanations, in the Lanzo Dream of 1876, with respect to Dominic Savio [cf. *EBM* XII, p. 439f.].

Between the 15th and 20th degree there lay a very long and wide basin (*seno*) that began at a point forming a lake. Then a voice spoke and said repeatedly: "When mines will be dug in the depths of these mountains (of that valley), then the promised land flowing with milk and honey will be revealed here, and there will be inconceivable wealth."¹⁰⁸

The incomparable [mineral] riches of the soil still awaiting discovery were revealed to my gaze. I saw numerous mines of precious metals, inexhaustible coal pits, petroleum deposits more abundant than existed anywhere. And this is not all. At many points the Cordilleras opened up on regions the existence of which is totally unknown to our geographers. They [mistakenly] imagine that in those regions mountain ranges form a kind of sheer wall. In those basins, in those valleys, which may be as long as one thousand kilometers, live dense populations which have had as yet no contact with Europeans, nations which are as yet completely unknown.¹⁰⁹

The train meanwhile kept rolling on and on, turning here, turning there. Finally it came to a stop. At this point a great number of passengers got off and crossed under the Cordillera over to the west. [Don Bosco made reference to Bolivia. The station may have been La Paz, where a tunnel may provide a passage to the Pacific coast, and may connect Brazil with Lima by another railway line.]¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ This marginal note in Lemoyne's hand has been interpreted as pinpointing geographically the future capital of Brazil, Brasilia, even though no mention is made of any city. A comment on the matter will be made in the next installment.

¹⁰⁹ These ideas were ridiculed in Rome. Lemoyne reporting Don Bosco's words writes: "In Rome I made a full presentation to Card. Barnabò [Prefect of *Propaganda Fide*]; but he ridiculed the project as childish fantasy, especially my statement that in South America there were large populations yet to be discovered. Therefore, he refused to speak to the Pope about it. Don Bosco himself then spoke to the Pope, who at once took the matter seriously and asked Card. Franchi [the next Prefect of the Congregation] to make a report. His Eminence was putting it off, however; and when Pius IX insisted, he would reply: 'These are delusions of a sick mind!' But Pius IX gave the order, got the report, and fully backed the new mission" [*Documenti XIV*, p. 143, ASC 110; Cronachette Lemoyne-Doc, *FDBM* 1,024 C4].

It should be noted that Pius IX had served as auditor in the apostolic delegations of Chile and Peru from 1823 to 1825

¹¹⁰ This is a comment by reporter Lemoyne.

[Scene 2: Second Stage of the Journey]

+ The name of the river should be noted (the Paraná, I think).

++ D.B. should also put the river's name here (Uruguay)

and as before it runs over bridges, through tunnels, by lakes, rivers, forests.

The train continued on its journey. We rode along the banks of the Uruguay. I had thought it was a short river; instead it is very long. At a certain point I saw the river + which flows close to the ++ both of them, rivers of great length. Then they separate and form a wide loop.

Meanwhile the train kept on rolling south, turning first one way, then another; after a long haul it came to a second stop. Here again a lot of people got off and crossed under the Cordillera over to the west. [Don Bosco made reference to the province of Mendoza in the Argentine Republic. Hence (he believes) the station may have been Mendoza, and the tunnel, that which gives access to Santiago or Valparaiso, the capital of Chile.]¹¹¹

[Scene 3: Third Stage of the Journey]

The train continued on its run through the Pampas and Patagonia. Fields under cultivation and scattered homesteads were an indication that civilization was making inroads into those deserts.

Huge heaps of metal partly in ore form and partly refined.

Finally we arrived at the Straits of Magellan. I was looking on. We got off. Puntarenas lay before me. The ground for miles around was strewn with stores of coal, planks, beams and lumber. Freight cars were parked in long rows on the tracks.

My young friend drew my attention to all these things. So, I asked him, "What are you trying to tell me by all this?"

"That at present," he replied, "this is all at the planning stage. But these savages will one day become so docile that they will freely come to be taught

¹¹¹ This is a comment by reporter Lemoyne.

religion, civilized living, and commerce. Here [the development] that has caused people elsewhere to marvel will be so astounding as to surpass that of all other peoples [*sic*].

It took but a moment. I got off the train and saw them at once. There were more churches, schools, many houses with large numbers of people in them, many hospices, apprentices in trade and agricultural schools, young people and adults together guided by missionaries— Daughters [of Mary Help of Christians?] were working at various domestic tasks. I mingled with them. They looked at me as though I were a stranger.

“I have seen enough [of this], I said ending the conversation. “Now take me to see my Salesians of Patagonia.”

He did, and I saw them. There were many of them, but they were unknown to me; and not one of my old sons was among them. They stared at me in utter amazement. And when I demanded, “Don’t you know me? Don’t you know Don Bosco?” “Don Bosco? Ay, yes, we know him alright; but ony from pictures, not personally,” [was their reply].

“And where are Fr. Fagnano, Fr. Lasagna, Fr. Costamagna?”¹¹²

“We have never known them personally. They are the pioneers of old, the first Salesians to come to these lands from Europe. But they have been dead these many years!”

On hearing this amazing reply, I began to ask myself: “Is this dream or reality?” I clapped my hands, felt my arms, and shook myself. I had a distinct perception of the sound of the clapping and of the feel of my body.

[X]

[Conclusion and Awakening]

In this troubled state, I thought I heard Quirino ring the morning Angelus; but upon awakening, I recognized the ringing of the bells of the parish church of St. Benignus.¹¹³

¹¹² Louis Lasagna (1850-1895), ordained in 1873, left for the missions with the second group in 1876. As director and then as provincial he developed the Salesian work in Uruguay and initiated scientific and cultural projects. He established the Salesian work in Brazil. He was ordained bishop in 1893 and charged by Leo XIII with the mission of protecting and evangelizing the natives there. But he died in a tragic train collision shortly thereafter.

¹¹³ Don Bosco was at San Benigno Canavese (a novitiate at this time) for the spiritual retreat with the members of the Third General Chapter, and was awakened by the Angelus bells of the local church of St. Benignus. In his half-waking state he had first thought that it was the Angelus bell rung by [?] Quirino, “that saintly brother—mathematician, polyglot and bell ringer” [*IBM XVI*, p. 394, note 1].

The dream had lasted all night long.¹¹⁴

[Moral Conclusion of the Narrator]

Don Bosco concluded with these words:

“With the gentleness of St. Francis de Sales will the Salesians succeed in drawing the peoples of [South] America to Jesus Christ. At first the task of converting the savages to Christian morals will be a most difficult one; but their children will most willingly accept the teachings of the missionaries. Through them colonies [missions] will be founded; civilization will replace barbarism; and a great number of savages will join the fold of Jesus Christ.”

[Note by Reporter]

N.B. The Bishop of San José, the capital of Costa Rica, in a letter dated September 15, 1883, asked Don Bosco for a few Salesian missionaries. This city is located right at the 10th degree [of latitude north], as indicated in Don Bosco’s dream.

Appendix X

[Act III of the Dream: Return Journey Northward by a Different Route]

Throughout my brief stay at that place I was amazed at the progress made by the Catholic Church, by our Congregation, and by civilization in those regions. I thanked divine Providence for deigning to make use of me as an instrument for God’s glory and the salvation of souls.

[Scene 1: First Stage of the Northward Journey: Cannibals]

As this was the southern end of Patagonia, [the river we saw] seemed to be a branch of the Colorado or the Chubut. I could not see in what direction it flowed, whether toward or away from the Cordillera. I could not get my bearings.

Meanwhile young Colle indicated that it was time to leave and start back. So, I bade goodbye to my Salesians, and we walked back to the station, where the train stood ready. We got on, the whistle blew, and off we were toward the north.

¹¹⁴ Dreams do not last all night, though they may appear to do so. They last only some fifteen minutes in real time during REM sleep toward the end of a sleep cycle.

I noticed one thing, which was new and surprising to me. The region of Patagonia, in the part lying closest to the Straits of Magellan and between the Cordilleras and the Atlantic Ocean, was narrower than commonly believed. The train kept on speeding northward, as I thought, through the provinces of the Argentine Republic already civilized.

Traveling further, we entered a very extensive, boundless virgin forest.

Their faces were misshapen. Their clothes seemed to be made of animal skins.

At one point the train stopped, and a gruesome spectacle took place before our eyes. A very large crowd of savages was assembled in a clearing in the middle of the forest. They encircled a man who was seated on a

rock and had been tied up. He was very fat, for the savages had fattened him for their purpose. The unlucky man had been taken prisoner. He seemed to be a foreigner, if one could judge from the smoothness of his features. The savages were questioning him, and in reply to their questions he was relating the many adventures encountered in his travels.

Suddenly one of the savages jumped up, advanced toward the prisoner, wielding a large steel weapon which though unlike a sword was razor-sharp nonetheless. With one blow he lopped off his head. The passengers who were standing at the doors and windows of the train, were horrified. Young Colle himself was speechless. Upon being struck, the victim let out a fearsome cry and fell dead in a pool of blood. The cannibals rushed upon the corpse and hacked it to pieces. They roasted the flesh, still warm and writhing, upon a fire, and devoured it.

[Scene 2: Second Stage of the Northward Journey: Field of Salesian Work]

Lake shores, river banks, plains, hills, foothills, slopes [?] of escarpments, of hills.

After that pitiful cry, the train started moving again, and gradually regained its headlong cruising speed. It ran alongside a very wide river, sometimes on the right bank, sometimes on the left. Although I

kept looking out the window, I did not notice the bridges which we were constantly traversing.

[*First Moment: Savages*]

At intervals large tribes of savages appeared on the river banks; and at each appearance the young man would point out: "There's the harvest, there's the harvest entrusted to the Salesians."

[*Second Moment: Wild Beasts and Poisonous Reptiles*]

Tigers, hyenas, lions, but with a different shape; they looked to me like dogs, pot-bellied, with wings—they had pens full of pigs, but different in form from ours—and huge toads; the toads were eating frogs—they growled as they snapped at each other.

Then we came to a region which was full of wild beasts and poisonous reptiles. Here also my guide turned to me and, pointing to those beasts, explained: "The Salesians will tame them."

[*Third Moment: End of the Journey*]

The train was now nearing the original point of departure, and arrival was imminent. The young man at this point pulled out a magnificent map and asked: "Do you wish to plot the journey you've just made, and see the regions you've travelled through?"

"I certainly would!" replied Don Bosco.

The young man then unfolded the map. It revealed with marvelous exactness the whole of [South] America. On it was represented everything that ever was, that is, and that will in the future be in existence in those regions; but without any clutter, and with such clarity that everything could be distinguished at a glance. I saw and understood everything then; but because of the very complexity of the situation, that clarity was of short duration. Now everything is a jumble in my mind.

While examining the map, I was also awaiting a word of explanation from the young man. But, as I was wrestling with the thought of all that lay before my eyes, I thought I heard ring the morning Angelus, etc. etc.

[*See Conclusion and Awakening above.*]

No remarks follow the dream narrative in the archival sources. In the *Biographical Memoirs*, on the other hand, Ceria has extensive comments on the revelatory character of this dream, and on the accuracy of its predictions, apart from and beyond the prophetic envisaging of the future for the Salesian work. He states that Don Bosco's knowledge expressed in the dream relating to Andean geography, to the future railway development, to the mineral riches of the Cordilleras, and to the geography and demography of Tierra del Fuego, could not have been derived from human sources.¹¹⁵ Obviously, the question is—what information was available to Don Bosco, both accurate and inaccurate, from general sources and from his own special research? What deductions, therefore, could be drawn, and what forecasts could be made on that basis?

¹¹⁵ Cf. *IBM XVI*, p. 395-398.

The question of the predictive character of these dreams will be addressed in the second installment.

II. The Third Missionary Dream (January 31, 1885)

1. The Church's Official Approval of Salesian Missionary Activity and the Ordination of John Cagliero as Bishop-Vicar Apostolic as Context for the Third Missionary Dream

Fr. Cagliero and Fr. Costamagna attended the Third General Chapter and the preparatory retreat. The latter had made first contact with the Araucan natives during the expedition of 1879 and had celebrated a memorable Mass in their presence at Choel-Choel. The theme of the missions was not on the Chapter's agenda, but it must have been a lively topic of conversation.¹¹⁶ The two protagonists must have had plenty of adventures to recount. Besides, they were the very persons whom Don Bosco had nominated for the post of Vicar Apostolic in his proposal to the Holy See. Perhaps this was not yet public knowledge; but Don Bosco must have opened his heart to them, and the three must have shared their successes, disappointments, and future projects, as they awaited a decision by the Holy See.

Fr. Costamagna was already on the high seas bound for the missions at the head of a band of 20 Salesians and 10 Salesian Sisters, when the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith came to a decision.¹¹⁷ But disappointingly, by the briefs of November 16 and 20, 1883, it only erected a pro-Vicariate for northern Patagonia, and a Prefecture for southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, naming Fr. Cagliero and Fr. Fagnano for those posts respectively. This arrangement granted less than what Don Bosco had hoped for, since neither Fr. Fagnano as Prefect nor Fr. Cagliero as pro-Vicar were to be appointed bishops.

At a meeting of the General Council held at Alassio on April 5, 1884, and presided over by Don Bosco, the question of the Patagonian Vicariate had been discussed, and its importance for the Salesian Society stressed. But it was pointed out that the Apostolic Delegate in Argentina (Bishop Aloisio Matera) even opposed the erection of a pro-Vicariate, for political as well as ecclesiastical considerations. Don Bosco remarked that "the nomination of a pro-Vicar could not be offensive to Argentina." He himself had "already written to the

¹¹⁶ Neither Don Bosco's letter of convocation of June 20, 1883, nor the eight themes published on the same date, nor the minutes of the Chapter, nor the proceedings published together with those of the Fourth General Chapter in 1887, show that the missions were up for discussion [cf. *Ceria-Ep*, IV, p. 221f; *Annali* I, p. 468f.; *ASC* 04: Capitolo Generali [...], *FDBM* 1,863 E7 = 1,864 B6; *Opere Edite* XXXVI, p. 249-280].

¹¹⁷ Cf. Don Bosco's letter to Fr. Costamagna of November 12, 1883, *Ceria-Ep*, p. 240f., and *IBM* XVI, 384 and 587f.

Archbishop [of Buenos Aires] and to the President of the Republic, submitting the plan for their consideration."¹¹⁸

From Alassio Don Bosco went on to Rome, where he meant primarily to petition Leo XIII personally for the privileges, but possibly also to discuss the Vicariate. His Roman sojourn lasted from April 14 to May 14, and it was a time of apprehension and pain. When he was finally granted an audience on May 9, the Pope assured the ailing venerable old man that the privileges would be granted, and that he loved him, yes, him and the Salesians! It appears, however, that the question of the Vicariate was not raised in the audience.¹¹⁹

In any case, back in Turin, Don Bosco sought Archbishop Cajetan Alimonda's mediation. This great friend of the Salesians also happened to believe that, in view of the great development of the missions on the Río Negro, it would have been more appropriate to have a full Vicariate established there, with a bishop at the helm. Consequently on September 26, 1884, he submitted a petition to Pope Leo XIII to that effect. Leo was not unaware of the situation in Argentina, and of that of the Salesian missions in particular. In the above-mentioned memorandum of April 13, 1880, and then again in a detailed report directly from the missions presented in early 1883, Don Bosco had kept him informed about what had been achieved and of what was in progress or being planned.¹²⁰ Hence, he granted the request, and by decree of October 30, 1884, he upgraded Patagonia to a Vicariate and made Fr. Cagliero vicar and bishop. Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, with Fr. Fagnano in charge, retained their status as a Prefecture.

It was a great victory, as well as a great physical and moral boost, for Don Bosco personally. But, more significantly, it was the seal of the Church's approval, the validation of the Salesian Society's great project, and a sure sign of the Pope's personal benevolence. Rightly Ceria writes:

¹¹⁸ These letters of Don Bosco to the Archbishop and to the President bear the date of July 29 and October 31, 1883 respectively and concerned, therefore, the *proposals* for the erection of the missionary jurisdictions. Why Don Bosco, and not the Roman Congregation, acted to inform the authorities remains unexplained. The Archbishop had all along been gracious and supportive. There is no record of any reply from President Julius Roca. The President is known to have opposed the erection of missionary jurisdictions, and Archbishop Ameyros was aware of that fact [cf. note 139 below]. On the other hand, in 1883 and 1884 Argentine authorities were asking Fr. Costamagna for Salesians to serve as chaplains or missionaries in various settlements in the southern territories, a fact which bespeaks a favorable attitude on the part of some of the authorities.

For the story of the Apostolic Delegate's opposition to the "project", its reasons, and ultimate outcome, cf. *IBM XVI*, p. 377-380.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Desramaut, *Études VIII (Cahiers)*, p. 49-56. The privileges were finally granted by decree of June 28, 1884. For a discussion, from primary sources, of the events of this Roman sojourn, of Don Bosco's health, of of the appointment of a successor, cf. *Ibid.* p.47-73 and 16-19.

¹²⁰ Cf note 84 above, and *Annali I*, p. 501.

The raising of this son of Don Bosco to the episcopacy was, for the whole Salesian family, an event of unparalleled significance. Later Salesian generations cannot even imagine the triumphant jubilation of the confreres at the time. Who would have dared entertain such a hope? For the Cooperators, too, it was a time to rejoice; for in that elevation they recognized the Church's anointing of the Salesian apostolate.¹²¹

Fr. Cagliero was ordained bishop, with the title of Mágida, by Cardinal Alimonda on December 7, 1884. On February 1, 1885 the bishop was ready to leave for his mission at the head of a band of 18 Salesians and 6 Salesian Sisters. Don Bosco had spent the previous days in a painful, almost anguished state of mind. He was, moreover, confined to his room by illness. Cagliero, his beloved son, was leaving him. He might never see him again. It was in this context and in this frame of mind that on the night preceding the departure of the missionaries, January 31, 1885, he had a dream—the Third Missionary Dream on South America.

2. Textual Tradition and Text of the Third Mission Dream

[i] Textual Tradition of the Third Missionary Dream

“Don Bosco accompanies the missionaries to [South] America.” This is the title given to the dream by Lemoyne in his second draft and in *Documenti*. Finding himself in a great plain, Don Bosco sees all the Salesian works connected by a network of fantastic highways. Then (after a “flight” back to Turin, and again to South America) he sees the plain transformed into a splendid hall in which are gathered, glory-bound, the missionaries and all the people saved through them.

F. Desramaut notes that the dream narrative was “unfortunately elaborated by Fr. Lemoyne.”¹²² Indeed it comes to us totally on Lemoyne's authority. As he himself writes in his original draft, “Here is how Don Bosco himself related the dream to me.” E. Ceria, in speaking of this dream, states that Don Bosco “narrated it almost immediately, and later reviewed it (*lo rivide*), when Fr. Lemoyne submitted it to him in writing.”¹²³ As far as is known, there are no drafts of this dream in the archives with corrections in Don Bosco's hand.

[Lemoyne A]

Lemoyne's first draft (here designated as *Lemoyne A*) is a rough copy of ten pages of text with some corrections and with many additional marginal notes clearly referred to the main text by a variety of signs.¹²⁴

¹²¹ *Annali* I, p. 504f.

¹²² Desramaut, *Études VIII (Cahiers)*, p. 120, note 66.

¹²³ *Annali* I, p. 505.

¹²⁴ *Lemoyne A* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, *FDBM* 1,321 C11-D8.

[*Lemoyne B*]

Lemoyne next produced a good copy of the narrative (some 16 pages long), integrating all marginal notes into a unified text with additional editorial work (here designated as *Lemoyne B*).¹²⁵ Apart from stylistic improvements, Lemoyne adds numerous descriptive details at various points. A long paragraph expatiating on the marvelous and indescribable complexity of the scene is inserted about midway. Two later small marginal notes in the second section of the dream narrative describe, one the aromas, the other the music, that filled the hall of glory.

[*Documenti and Biographical Memoirs*]

In *Documenti*, Lemoyne merely transcribes *Lemoyne B*, integrating the two marginal notes, with some stylistic editing. Likewise, the *Biographical Memoirs* transcribe the text of *Documenti*, with some changes relating to style, punctuation, orthography, and vocabulary.¹²⁶

A comparison shows that the dream narrative is already substantially complete in *Lemoyne A*, which also best represents Don Bosco's narration as gathered by Lemoyne. Hence this is the text given in the translation that follows. In it the marginal additions are brought into the main text (in *italics*) with the help of the reference signs found in the Ms. and of *Lemoyne B*.

[ii] Text of the Third Missionary Dream

(1) The Text of the Third Mission Dream According to *Lemoyne A*

[No title]

[Reporter's Introduction]

On the night of January 31-February 1, Don Bosco had a dream. He had passed the entire preceding day thinking of the [impending] departure of Bishop Cagliero and the missionaries with anguished emotion. On the following day, in the evening, his sons would be traveling to Marseilles by way of Sanpierdarena. His tender fatherly love was the cause of the concern that weighed heavily upon him. Following is the dream as Don Bosco himself related it to me.

The additional marginal material may have been obtained from Don Bosco upon inquiry. Some jottings in Lemoyne's hand at the end of the narrative seem to reflect questions which Lemoyne intended to put to Don Bosco: "The flowers, were they scented? The angels, their appearance? Louis Colle, what did he say?" [not clear]

¹²⁵ *Lemoyne B* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, *FDBM* 1,321 B7-C10.

¹²⁶ *Documenti* XXIX [c. 5], p. 43-48, in ASC 110: Cronachette, Lemoyne-Doc, *FDBM* 1,106 D12-E5; *IBM* XVII, p. 299-305.

[Dream Setting: Don Bosco Accompanies the Missionaries]

I seemed to be accompanying the missionaries on their trip. *Before leaving we exchanged a few words.* They stood around me, asking for words of advice. I was telling them: "Not with worldly wisdom, not with good health (*sanità* [sic]), nor with wealth, but with zeal and piety, will you be able to do much good, and to further the glory of God and the salvation of souls."¹²⁷

[Act I: The Future Salesian Works in the Vast Plain]

One moment we were at the Oratory; the next moment, without knowing how and by what means, we found ourselves almost instantly in [South] America.

[Scene 1: Fantastic Highways Connecting the Salesian Works]

At the end of the trip, I found myself alone on a vast plain situated between Chile and the Argentine Republic. *My dear missionaries were already scattered here and there in that limitless place. I was amazed to see how few in number they appeared to be, even after so many missionary expeditions. But on second thought, I realized that their number seemed small because they had spread out to so many different places, like seedlings that need to be transplanted so that they may grow and multiply elsewhere.*

Very long and numerous roads could be seen [on that plain]; scattered along [those roads] stood numerous houses. These roads were unlike those on earth, nor did the houses resemble those in this world. They were mysterious, almost spiritual objects. Along those roads ran vehicles, or transportation devices, *which on moving along acquired a thousand fantastic aspects and a thousand diverse shapes, but all so amazing and marvelous to behold, that I cannot even begin to describe them.* I was amazed to see that these vehicles on reaching groups of houses, villages or cities, would soar high over the roofs, so that the passenger could see the house tops far below. Although the houses were very tall, yet they lay far below those roads; *for, while the roads ran flat on the ground in the desert, when they neared a population center they soared into the air, forming, as it were, a magical bridge. From that height, the passenger could observe people in their houses, courtyards, and streets, as well as those working in the fields.* Each one of those roads ended at one of our missions.

[The Road out of Chile Ending at a Formation Center] At the end of one very long road that stretched all the way from Chile I could see a [Salesian] house in which many Salesian confreres were engaged in study and prayer, *and in various trades and agriculture.*

[View of Salesian Works 1] To the south lay Patagonia. In the opposite direction, I could see at one glance all our houses in the Argentine Republic; and

¹²⁷ In later drafts this was re-phrased: "Not with worldly wisdom, but with holiness (*santità*); not with wealth, but with zeal and prayer [...]."

further, in *Uruguay*, Paysandú, Las Piedras, Villa Colón; in *Brazil* the school of Niteroy and many of our other houses scattered throughout the empire of Brazil.

[The Road Westward to the Unknown Country, and the Interpreter] Another very long road ran westward, crossed rivers, seas and lakes, and ended in a country unknown [to me]. I saw but few Salesians in that country; in fact, I looked carefully but could see only two of them. *At that moment there stood by me a gentleman of noble and attractive mien, chubby, of rather pale complexion, beardless like a youth, and yet mature like a grown man. He wore a white garment under a rose-colored cloak woven with gold threads, and shining with light. I recognized my Interpreter.*¹²⁸

“What country is this?” I asked him.

“This is Mesopotamia,” answered the Interpreter.

“You must be wrong,” I rejoined. “This is Patagonia!”

“I am telling you,” he replied, “that this is Mesopotamia.”

“Perhaps, but I can’t believe it.”

“That is so; it’s Me-so-po-ta-mia,” said the Interpreter with finality, stressing every syllable so that it would make an impression.

“But why are there so few Salesians here?” I asked.

“What now is not, in the future shall be,” said the Interpreter, ending our discussion.¹²⁹

[View of Salesian Works 2] *Meanwhile, still standing in the middle of that plain, with the eye I traveled those endless roads and had the clearest view of our mission centers present and future.* So many wonderful things did I see. I saw each and everyone of our schools. [Focused] in one point, I saw the past, the present and the future of our Missions. But since I saw everything together at a glance, it is very difficult, in fact impossible, to give even a faint and partial idea of that spectacle. A large volume would not suffice to give even a summary description of what I saw in that plain alone, of Chile, Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina. On that vast plain I also observed a great number of savages scattered throughout the Pacific [region] down to the Gulf of Ancud, on the Straits of Magellan, at Cape Horn, in the Diego [Ramírez] and in the Falkland Islands.¹³⁰ All this was destined to be the harvest reserved for the Salesians.

¹²⁸ This may mean that Don Bosco recognized that this person was to be his Interpreter (as in other dreams); or that he recognized who the Interpreter was. No name is given. He cannot have been Louis Colle, because young Colle appears later among the blessed [cf. note 102 above].

¹²⁹ This unknown country, identified by the Interpreter as Mesopotamia, is reached by a westward highway that crosses rivers, seas and lakes. Therefore “Mesopotamia” cannot refer to some area of South America lying between two rivers (as Ceria, *Annali* I, p. 506, note 2, speculates), nor more specifically to the province of Entre Ríos y Corrientes in northern Argentina.

Mesopotamia, that is, the country lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates (modern Iraq), is mentioned also in the Fourth Missionary Dream.

¹³⁰ The Gulf of Ancud, so named from the city of Ancud on Chiloé Island in southern Chile, is located at about the 42nd degree of latitude south.

[Epilogue to Scene 1: Missionary Reflections] I realized that the Salesians are now just sowing the seed. Those who will come after us will gather in the harvest. Men and women will join our ranks and will become preachers themselves. Their very children, whom it now seems impossible to convert to the faith, will become the evangelizers of their families and friends. The Salesians will succeed in bringing this about through humility, work and temperance.

The things I witnessed at that moment and subsequently, all dealt with the Salesians—their permanent settlement in those countries, their marvelous increase, and [through them] the conversion of the many natives and of the Europeans settlers established in those lands. Europe will descend upon [South] America. From the moment that churches began to be plundered in Europe in 1854 ? [sic], from that moment commerce began to decline and will continue to decline. As a consequence, workers and their families, driven by dire necessity, will seek a new home in those hospitable lands.

[Scene 2: The “Flight” back to Turin, the Procession of Missionaries, and the Return to the Plain]

After having seen the field which the Lord has assigned to us, and the future of the Salesian Congregation, I seemed to be getting ready for my return trip to Italy. [As I travelled] I was moving at very great speed over a strange and very high road, so that in a flash I arrived over the Oratory. The whole of the city of Turin lay at my feet, and its houses, spires and palaces looked like small huts [from that height]. I could see our youngsters moving about at the farther end of the Oratory like so many little mice. But their number was enormous. Priests, seminarians, students, and shop masters filled the entire area. Many were departing as in procession, while others were replacing them. It was a never-ending flow. All those people were now assembled in that vast plain which lay between Chile and Argentina, *and to which I had meanwhile returned in a flash*. I stood there watching them. Then a young priest who resembled our Fr. Pavia (but only looked like him) came toward me. He had handsome good looks and a youthful complexion. He approached me, and with an amiable and courteous gesture said: “These are the souls and these the lands assigned to the sons of St. Francis de Sales.”¹³¹

In all probability the “Diego Islands” are the Diego *Ramírez* Islands—a couple of small, barren Chilean islands south of Tierra del Fuego—not the Diego Garcia Islands in the Indian Ocean, nor the Diego de Almagro Island in southern Chile. These “Diego Islands” also appear in the itinerary of the Fourth Missionary Dream, to be discussed in the next installment.

¹³¹ Fr. Joseph Pavia (1852-1915), was ordained in 1876. In 1884 Don Bosco named him director of the daily oratory at Valdocco, in which capacity he served until his death [*Dizionario Biografico* (1969), p. 215]. Both description and message cast this person in the role of a secondary interpreter.

Then to my amazement I realized that the great throng that had gathered there had disappeared in a flash, and I could barely tell by [some movement in] the distance in which direction they had vanished.

*At that point Bishop Cagliero appeared at my side. Some missionaries stood at some distance. Many others gathered around me, as did a good number of Salesian cooperators. Among them I recognized Mgr. Espinosa, Dr. Torrero, Dr. Caranza [sic] and the Vicar General of Chile.*¹³²

[Act II: The Hall of Glory]

[Setting for Act II]

As I was talking with Bishop Cagliero and others present, and we were trying to sort out the meaning of what was happening, my faithful Interpreter approached and said to me in the most courteous manner: "Listen, and you will understand."

At that moment that vast plain was turned into a great hall. I cannot even begin to describe it. I will only say that it was magnificent beyond human imagining. Its vastness had no visible boundaries, and it seemed to have no enclosing walls. Its height appeared beyond reach, and its domed ceiling rested on immense and most resplendent arches *which hung with no visible support*. The cupola, as well as the pavement of that great hall seemed woven of purest linen, like some fantastic tapestry. There were no lights, no sun, no moon, no stars within the hall; but a splendid light flooded every part of it. The very brightness of the linen highlighted with delightful effect every part of the hall, its ornaments, its windows and its gates.

[Scene I: Richly Set Tables with No Food]

Then an extraordinary thing took place. A great number of very long tables suddenly appeared, set as for a banquet and extending in all directions from one central point. *These were spread with elegant table cloths and with crystal vases filled with a great variety of flowers.*

Bishop Cagliero was the first to remark: "The tables are set; but where is the food?"

My friendly Interpreter explained: "Those that enter here neque sitiunt, neque esurient amplius."¹³³

¹³² Mariano Espinosa was first Vicar General, later Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Drs. [?] Torrero and Eduardo Carranza, were Salesian cooperators in the same city; the latter was also president of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul. The "Vicar General of Chile" may have been Msgr. Domingo Cruz, Vicar General of Concepción, Chile [cf. Ceria, *Annali* I, p. 508; Ceria, *Ep* IV, 565].

¹³³ "They will neither thirst nor hunger any more" [Rev 7: 16].

[Scene 2: Entrance of Glory-Bound Groups of People]

No sooner were these words spoken, than people all dressed in white began to file into the hall. They wore a simple, rose-colored, *gold-embroidered* band as a scarf around their neck and shoulders. The first group was fairly small, *just a few people*. As they came into the great hall, they would take a seat at a table prepared for them and sing, "Bless the Lord!" These were followed by other, larger groups, who sang as they came forward, "Bless the Lord for victory won!" Then all kinds of people began to enter—tall and short and of all ages; differing in color, features and appearance. Singing began to ring out on all sides. Those who had already taken their place were singing, "Bless the Lord!" Those that were coming in [responded]. *Each group represented a country, or a region within a country, that would be converted by the missionaries.*

As I looked over those endless tables, I noticed also many of our sisters and confreres among those who were seated and singing. *But they did not have any mark that distinguished them as priests or sisters; Like all the others they too wore the white garment and the rose-colored stole.* And my amazement grew, as I noticed rough-looking people dressed in the same manner and singing the same song as the rest: "Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord for victory won!" Then our Interpreter explained: "Foreigners, savages who drank the milk of divine teaching from their educators have themselves become proclaimers of the Word of God."

I noticed also bands of strange-looking children among the throng. I asked:

"Who are these children whose complexion is as rough as that of a toad, and yet who appear so beautiful and resplendent? Who are they?"

"These," The Interpreter replied, "are the children of Ham who did not renounce the inheritance of Levi.¹³⁴ These are the reenforcements who will guarantee the continuance of the reign of God which has been established also among us. At first their number was small, but it increased as the children of their children were added to it. Now you hear and see; but you will not be able to understand the mysteries you will be shown." (Those young people were Patagonians and southern Africans.)¹³⁵

Meanwhile the number of those that were entering that extraordinary hall that defied description had grown so large that every seat seemed taken. *Strange enough these seats had no set shape, but took on the shape desired by*

¹³⁴ The association of Ham with Levi is not Biblical, and the sentence is obscure. It may mean "who have not been unfaithful to God," and it may refer to Dt 10: 8f.: "At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant [...]. Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; the Lord is his inheritance."

The association of Patagonia with Ham is also anomalous.

¹³⁵ Both South American dreams contain what might be called anomalous references that go beyond South America—the Second Missionary Dream mentions "Boston;" the present dream, "Mesopotamia" and now "southern Africa."

those who occupied them. All were satisfied with their allotted seats, and no one envied another person's place.

Now, while the shouts of "Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord for victory won!" echoed on all sides, a [final] great throng appeared and joined those [already present], while singing: "Alleluia! Glory! Bless the Lord for victory won!"

[Scene 3: The Glory]

[The First Silence and the Choirs] When the hall seemed filled to capacity, there was a moment of complete silence. Then the assembled throngs began to sing as different choirs.

First choir: "Appropinquavit in nos regnum Dei; laetentur coeli et exultet terra; Dominus regnavit super nos, alleluia."

Second Choir: "Vicerunt, et ipse Dominus dabit edere de ligno vitae, et non esurient in aeternum: alleluia."

Third Choir: "Laudate Dominum omnes gentes, laudate eum omnes populi."¹³⁶

[The Second Silence: the Choirs from on High join the Choirs Below] While these and other anthems were being sung, all of a sudden there was another moment of complete silence. Then voices from on high and from afar [were heard singing]. The gist of the anthem, sung with indescribable and beautiful harmony, was this: "Soli Deo honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum." And other choirs, also high and far away, echoed in reply: "Semper gratiarum actio illi qui erat, est, et venturus est. Illi eucharistia, illi soli honor sempiternus."¹³⁷

Then those choirs descended and drew nearer. Among those celestial singers was also Louis Colle. Those who were already in the hall joined [the new arrivals] in the singing, and there arose a harmony of such range and beauty that only heavenly musical instruments could produce. All sang as one choir, united in that glorious music, with such inspiration, beauty and appeal to the human senses, that I fell on my knees at Bishop Cagliero's feet and exclaimed:

"Ah! Cagliero, this must be heaven!"

"No," he replied, "this isn't heaven; it is only a pale imitation of what heaven is like."

¹³⁶ "The kingdom of God has come upon us" (after Mt 12:28 and Lk 11:20). "Let the heaven be glad, and let the earth rejoice" [1 Chr 16:31]. "The Lord has reigned over us, alleluia" [after Mic 4: 7]. They conquered, and the Lord himself shall give them to eat of the tree of life, and they shall never again be hungry, alleluia" [after Rev 2: 7 and 7:16]. "Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!" [Ps 117: 1].

¹³⁷ "To God alone be honor and glory forever" [1 Tim 1: 17]. "Unending thanksgiving be forever to him who was, is, and is to come. To him be praise; to him alone be honor unending" [after Rev. 4: 8 and 7: 12].

Meanwhile all the voices joined together in singing with indescribable harmony: "Soli Deo honor et gloria, et triumphus, alleluia, in aeternum, in aeternum!"¹³⁸

[Conclusion of the Dream Narrative]

At this point I experienced such ecstatic joy that I lost track of what was happening.

[Conclusion of the Narrator]

When morning came, I found it difficult to get out of bed. Only when I went to celebrate holy Mass, did I finally get a hold of myself.

The main thought this dream left me with, and the impression it made on me, prompted me to give Bishop Cagliero and my dear missionaries this one very important piece of advice affecting the future of our missions—that the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians should make every effort to promote priestly and religious vocations.

Denouement: *Missions de Facto and de Jure*

When Bishop Cagliero and the missionaries arrived in Montevideo (Uruguay), a crisis was brewing in Argentina. In the first place, opposition to the Salesians and their work on the Río Negro and elsewhere, already bitter through 1884, had climaxed into a veritable persecution. The abettor was the Governor of the Province of Río Negro, General Winter, who also commanded the military detachments guarding the frontier. The accusations had been taken up and reedited with success by a bitterly anticlerical press. Then, to complicate the situation, General Roca's presidential term was coming to an end. This brought on turmoil and unrest. It was feared that the new political forces vying for control would be even more radical. Under these circumstances, whether bending to the prevailing winds, or out of its own perverseness, the government was refusing to accept the new Vicar on grounds that there had been no prior consultation regarding the establishment of a Vicariate.¹³⁹

Bishop Cagliero, after tarrying a while in Uruguay, took up residence in the Salesian School of Almagro (Buenos Aires), awaiting the right moment to make an official appearance, and hopefully to take possession of his See. The chief target of the accusations by the Governor and in the press was Fr. Fagnano. It was he who now acted in his own defense and that of the Salesians. While

¹³⁸ To God alone be honor and glory and triumph, alleluia, forever and ever" [after 1 Tim 1: 17 and 6: 16].

¹³⁹ In a letter to Don Bosco dated January 2, 1885, Archbishop Aneyros had clearly described the pique of the Government in having to face a fait accompli in the matter of the Vicariate [quoted in *Ceria-Ep* IV, p. 314, note 1].

trying to pacify the Governor at Patagones, he brought his case before the Archbishop with a detailed exposition of the facts. The Archbishop then took the case to the Minister of the Interior, who apparently accepted the explanation, and refrained from acting on the Governor's brief. With this development, and taking advantage of a lull in the press, Bishop Cagliari asked to be received by President Roca. With Fr. Costamagna, who had accompanied the General on the expedition of 1879, he presented his credentials to the President. The audience started badly, but took a turn for the better, when Fr. Costamagna began to recall events from the expedition, and Bishop Cagliari reassured the President that as a Salesian and as Vicar he would work for the development of all the people in the area. Thus pacified, the President gave him a letter of introduction to the Governor. On July 9, 1885, Bishop Cagliari could finally obtain permission to enter his See at Patagones.¹⁴⁰ The Salesian Missions could now truly be said to be established not only *de facto*, but also *de jure*.

At this time Don Bosco's health had taken a turn for the worse. He was losing his eyesight, a consequence of his rapidly degenerating bodily systems. It was a foreboding of his approaching end. But his moral vigor and spiritual insight seemed rather to be on the increase. He was sure now that the spread of the Salesian work in South America and worldwide could not be stopped. Painfully he wrote to his generals in the field. These letters are precious guidelines for Salesian missionary strategy, as well as spiritual testaments.¹⁴¹ And he continued to dream. But now his dreams transcended South America and had a wider scope. They projected the worldwide expansion of the Salesian work.

The Fourth and Fifth Missionary Dreams will form the subject of the next installment. That portion of our essay will deal with the context and with the text of these subsequent dreams. Furthermore, we shall attempt an interpretation that will comprise particular aspects as well as the total import of Don Bosco's missionary dreams, dreams which truly reveal the dreamer's missionary heart and will.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *IBM XVII*, p. 310-318.

¹⁴¹ Letters of August 6, 1885 to Bishop Cagliari (Vicar Apostolic); of August 10 to Fr. Costamagna (Provincial) and to Fr. Fagnano (Prefect Apostolic); of August 14 to Fr. Tomatis (Director at San Nicolás); of September 30 to Fr. Lasagna (Director at Villa Colón and Provincial of Uruguay and Brazil)—cf. *Ceria-Ep IV*, p. 327-329, 332f., 334f., 336f., 340f.