

Paris Missionary Society in Barotseland - Early Postcards

Formed in 1822, the *Société des missions évangéliques de Paris* (Paris Missionary Society) was responsible for a number of missionary ventures across the world (Basutoland, Gabon, New Caledonia, Barotseland {Zambeze}, Madagascar and Togo). In 1884, the Reverend François Coillard left Basutoland with a small party of missionaries accompanied by Sotho evangelists in wagons and by September, 1886, started the first mission station in Barotseland at Sesheke.

In the next 10-20 years a number of mission stations were established in Barotseland - **Sesheke** (1886), **Sefula** (1886), **Kazungula** (1889), **Lealui** (1892), **Nalolo** (1894), **Senanga** (1898), **Victoria Falls** (in fact near the **Old Drift, Livingstone**) (1899), **Mabumbu** (1899/1900), **Seoma** (1903), **Lukona** (1905), **Livingstone** (1907).

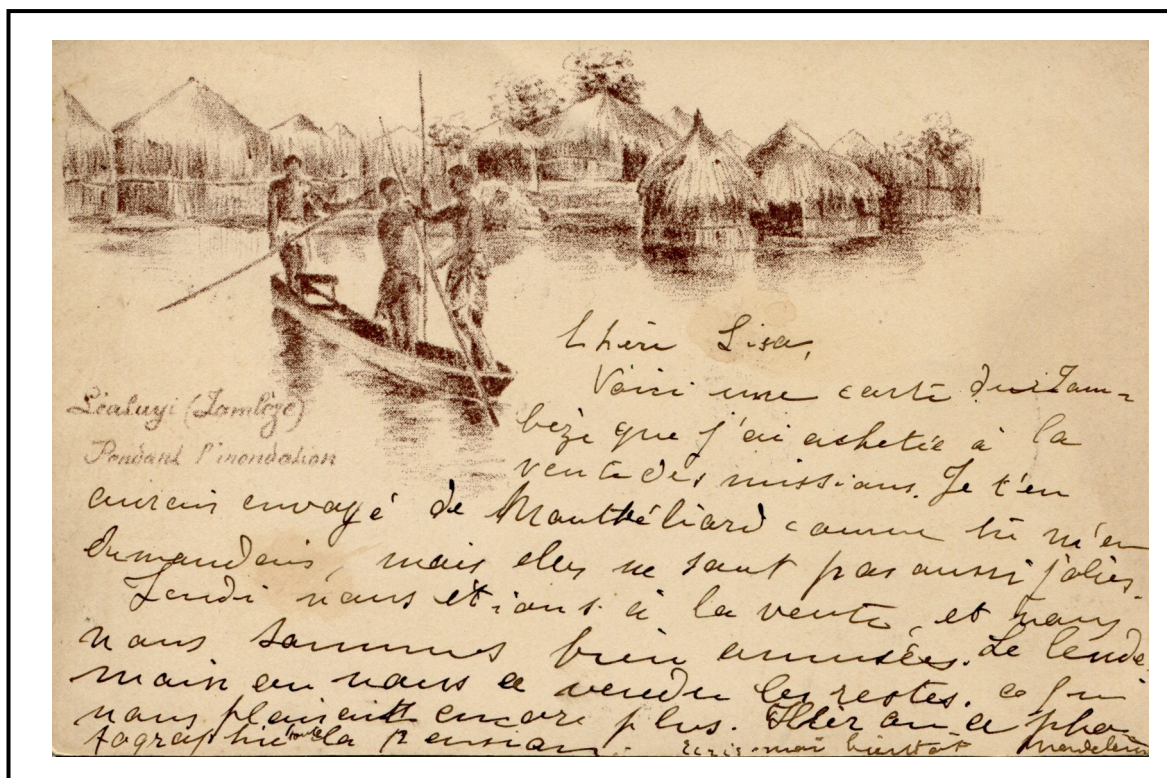
To fund this missionary endeavour, numerous support groups (called *Zambezas*) were established across Europe. At its peak, over one hundred of these groups provided funding and materials for the missionaries in Central Africa. To raise awareness of, and funds for, the missionaries, a number of series of postcards were published in Europe. The first series was published in 1905. Many of these cards were derived from photographs taken by various missionaries.

However, before this date, some postcards were published and these very early cards are the feature of this exhibit. They are split into three groups:

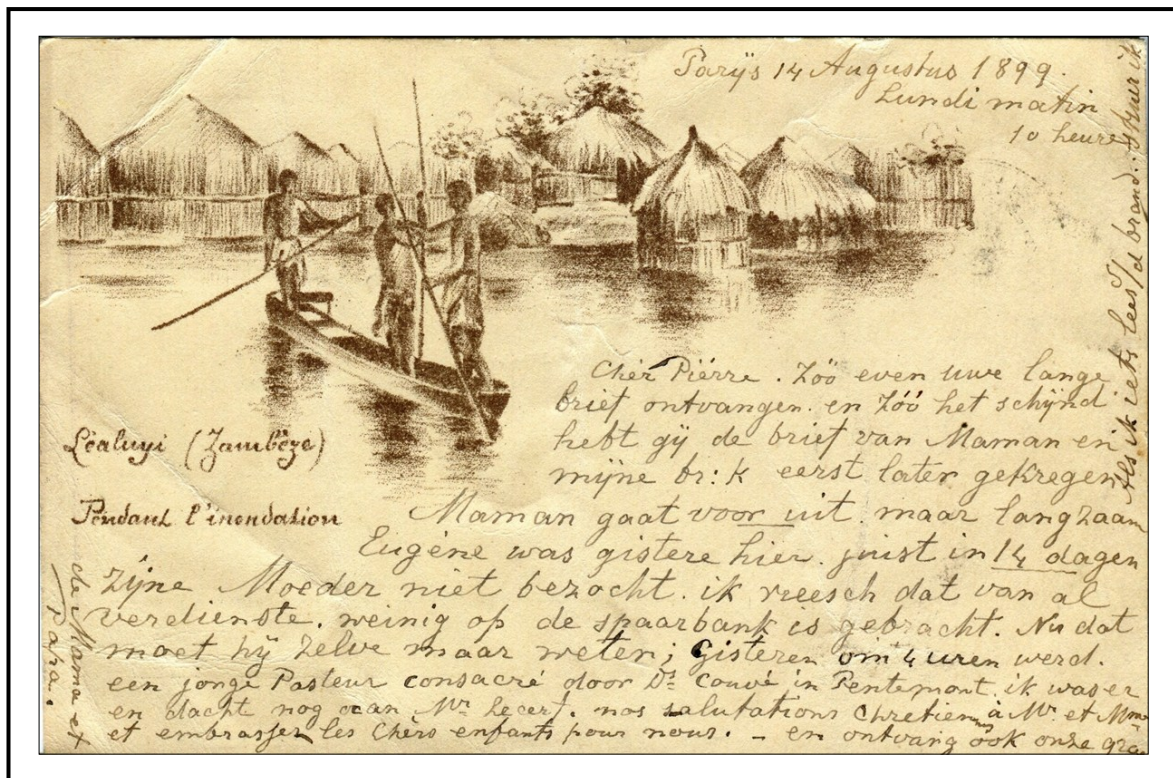
1. Cards with etchings drawn from early photographs seem to have been published as early as 1899 and used to publicise the work of the Barotse mission. Only four are known, and all of them appear in this exhibit. The first three were used from Paris, the last from Geneva; this may have been published for a particular purpose - as an invitation to a meeting?
2. Secondly, there are a miscellaneous group of postcards published under the auspices of Captain Alfred Bertrand of Geneva. Bertrand was a great supporter of the PMS and especially the *Zambezas* in Switzerland. He seems to have used many of these cards as 'Christmas cards'. The 'Christmas cards' from 1904-1907 all include a Biblical quotation. There is an example of all of these 'Christmas cards' except the one for 1907 where only an image on a website is known.
3. Finally, there are three known postcards published of photographs taken by the Reverend Theo Burnier. He arrived in Barotseland in March 1899, and these cards appeared in Europe as early as 1902.

References:

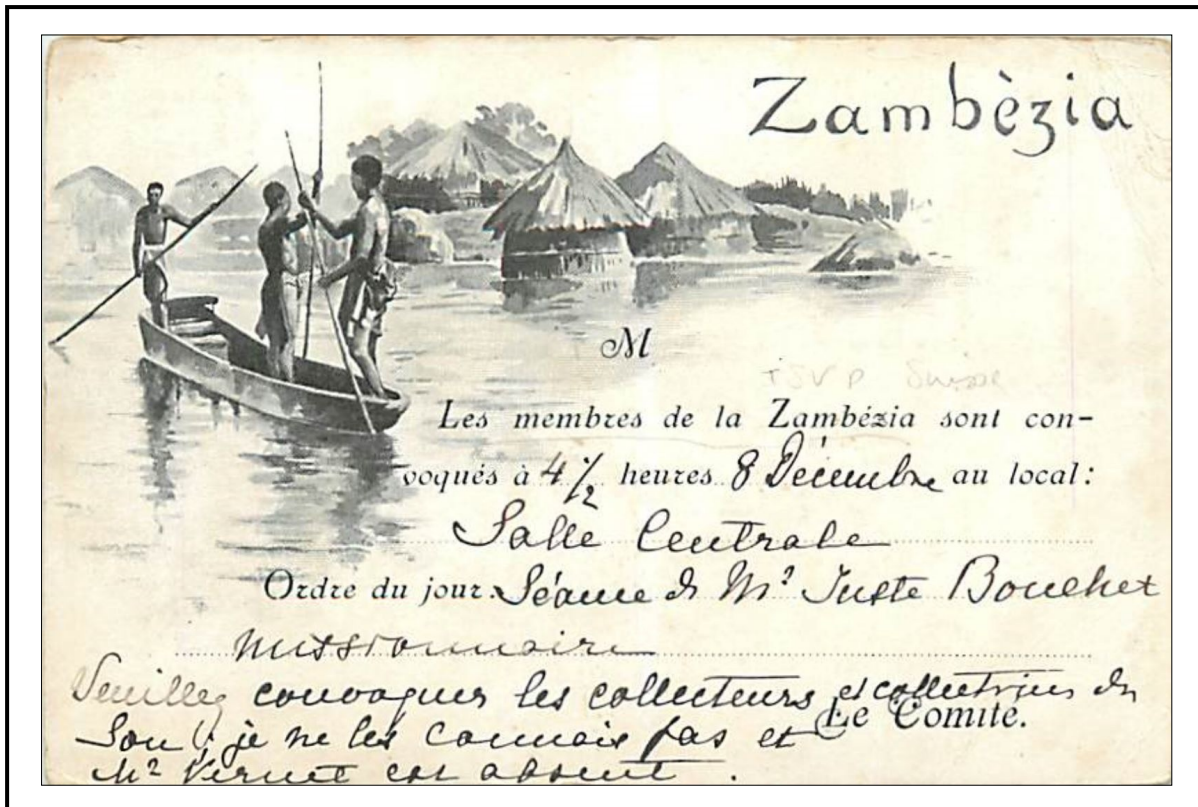
- Burke, S., Drysdall, A., and Pegg, P., 2010, *Memoir 15, The Early Postal History of Barotseland; The Role of the Paris Missionaries in N.W. Rhodesia*.
- Burke, S., Pegg, P., and Flanagan, P., 2021 *Memoir 30, The postal history of the Paris Missionary Society in Barotseland 1884-1924*.
- Favre, Eduard, 1913, *François Coillard, missionnaire au Zambèze 1882-1904*.
- Bertrand, A., 1898, *Au pays des Ba-Rotsi*
- *Journal of the Rhodesian Study Circle* - various issues.



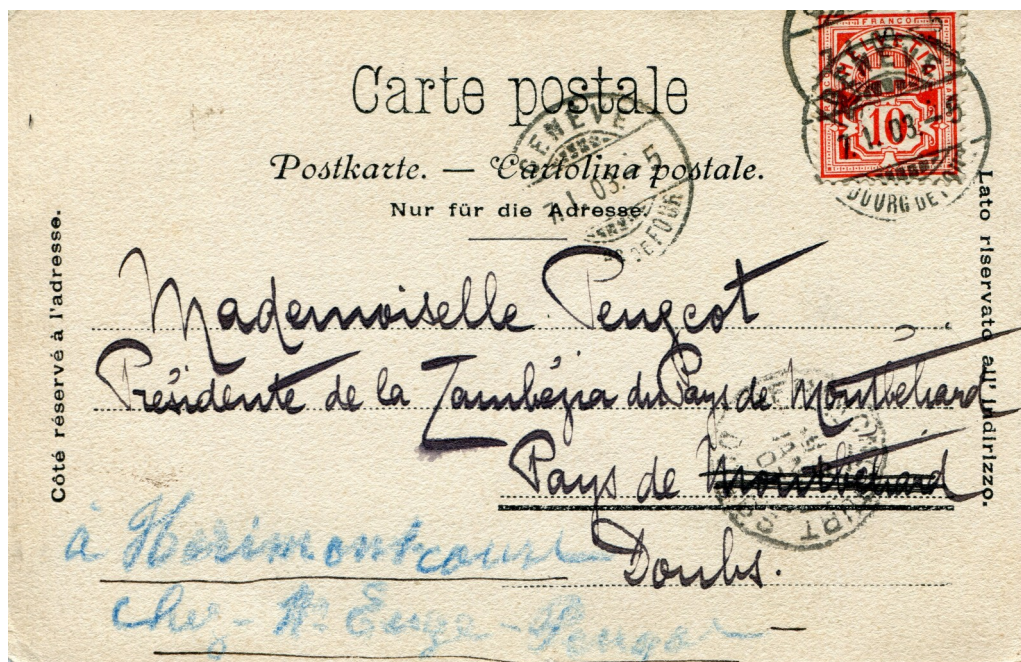
This card, inspired by a PMS drawing of Lealui, was used in Paris in August, 1899. This is the earliest known example of a PMS—related postcard. It is an example of a lithograph postcard and has an undivided back. There are only two known using this image. Both appear in this exhibit.



This second card, inspired by a PMS drawing of Lealui, was used in Paris on 14 August, 1899. This is the second earliest known example of a PMS—related postcard. It is an example of a lithograph postcard and has an undivided back.



A similar image as to the first two cards, but it is a publication style, this example contains an invitation to a meeting (8 December, 1905) of the Geneva *Zambèzia* which was to be addressed by missionary, Juste Bouchet. A wonderful example of the practical use of these cards. Similarly, it is an example of a lithograph postcard with an undivided back. Possibly it may be a one-off printing for an event(s)?



Captain Alfred Bertrand, Swiss explorer and great supporter of the PMS and M. Eduoard Favre, of Geneva, were probably the most influential people behind the Zambezias. They, and others, were responsible for the publication of a number of postcards. One of the earliest cards known is shown here. Only one of these has been recorded. From Captain Bertrand to the President of the Zambezia in Pays de Doubs. He is sending new year greetings. (This is the first of what has become known as the Bertrand Christmas cards.)

The card, posted in Geneva on 2 January, 1903, was published by Hubacher & Cie, Bern. It was a lithograph made postcard.



This card was obviously published at the same time as the previous one. Four are reported and this one has the added bonus of being from Favre and his wife and was an invitation to a 'Soirée Missionnaire', where M. and Mme. Juste Bouchet from the Zambèze mission were to speak.

The card, posted in Geneva on 21 January, 1903, was published by Hubacher & Cie, Bern. It was a lithograph



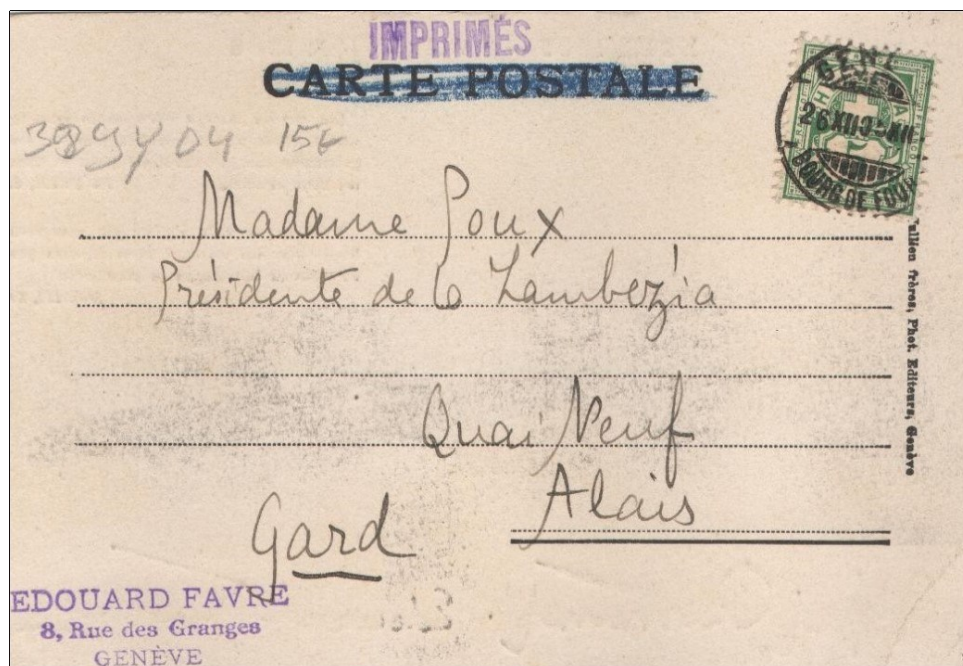
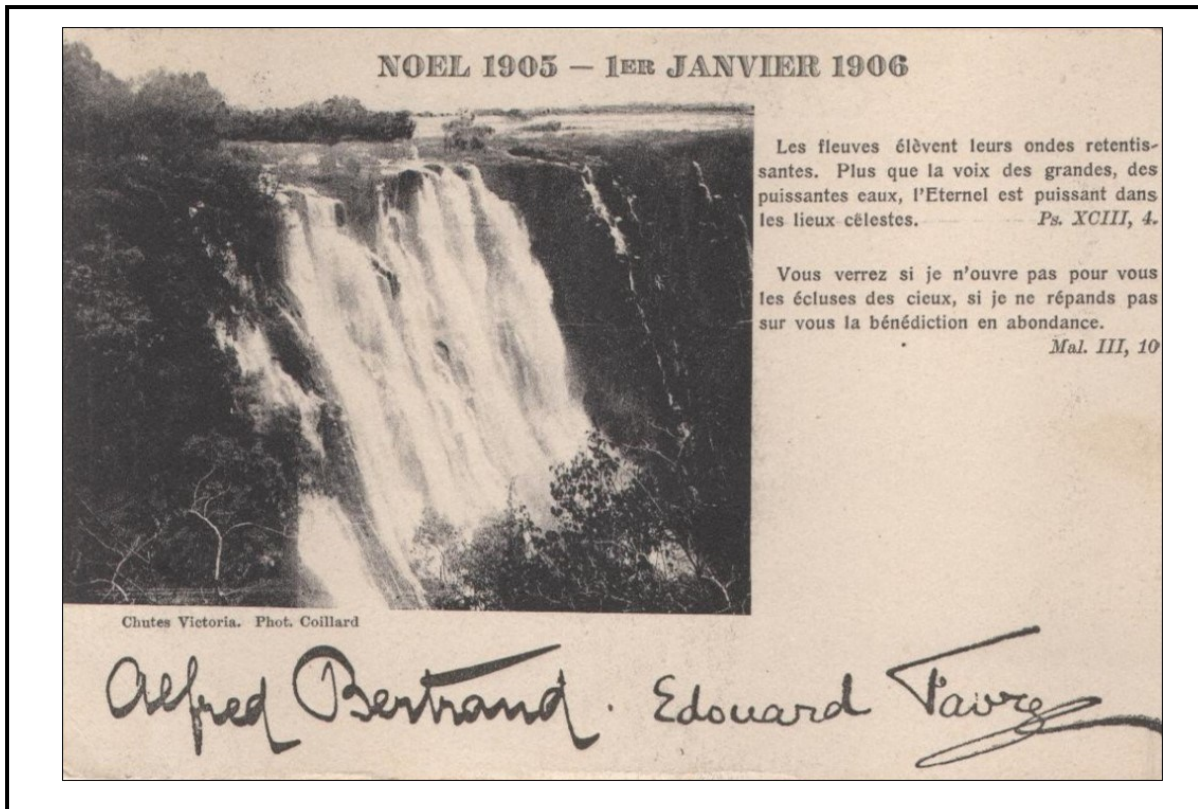
This is the second of the Bertrand Christmas cards. It is sent to the President of Zambezia in Alais (Alès) Gard in France. Only one is known. Sadly, the stamp has been removed.

Although much the same as the previous year, the publisher is not named on the card. The lithograph is now moved to using photographs - here featuring Reverend François Coillard and two versions of King Lewanika of Barotseland.



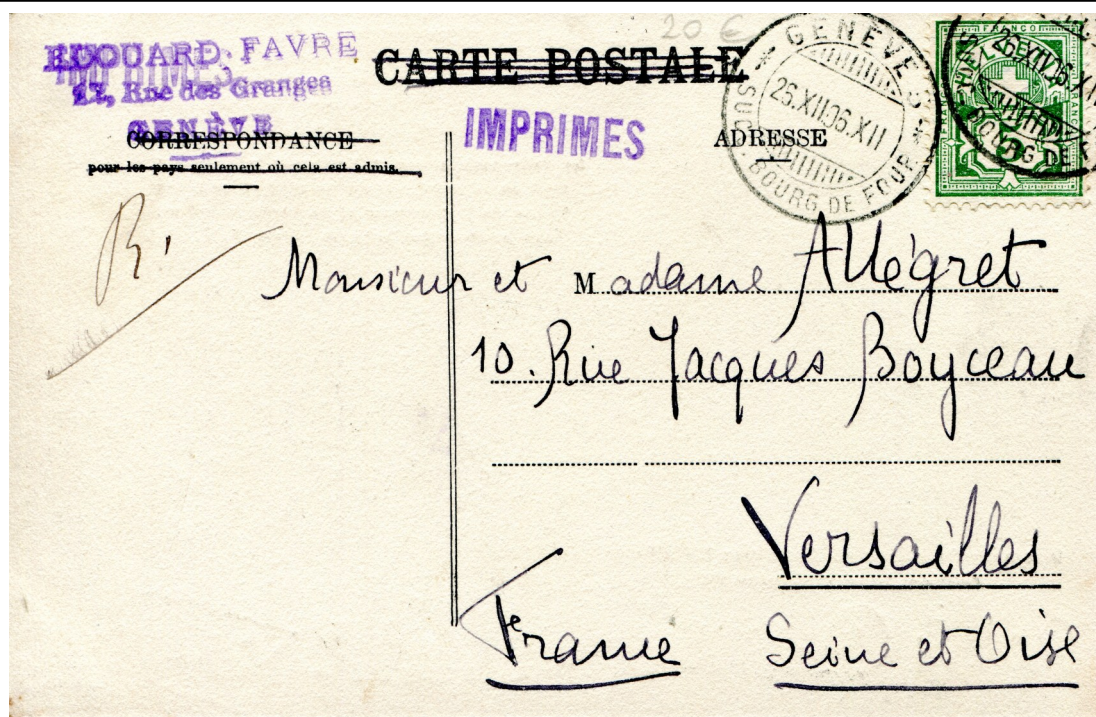
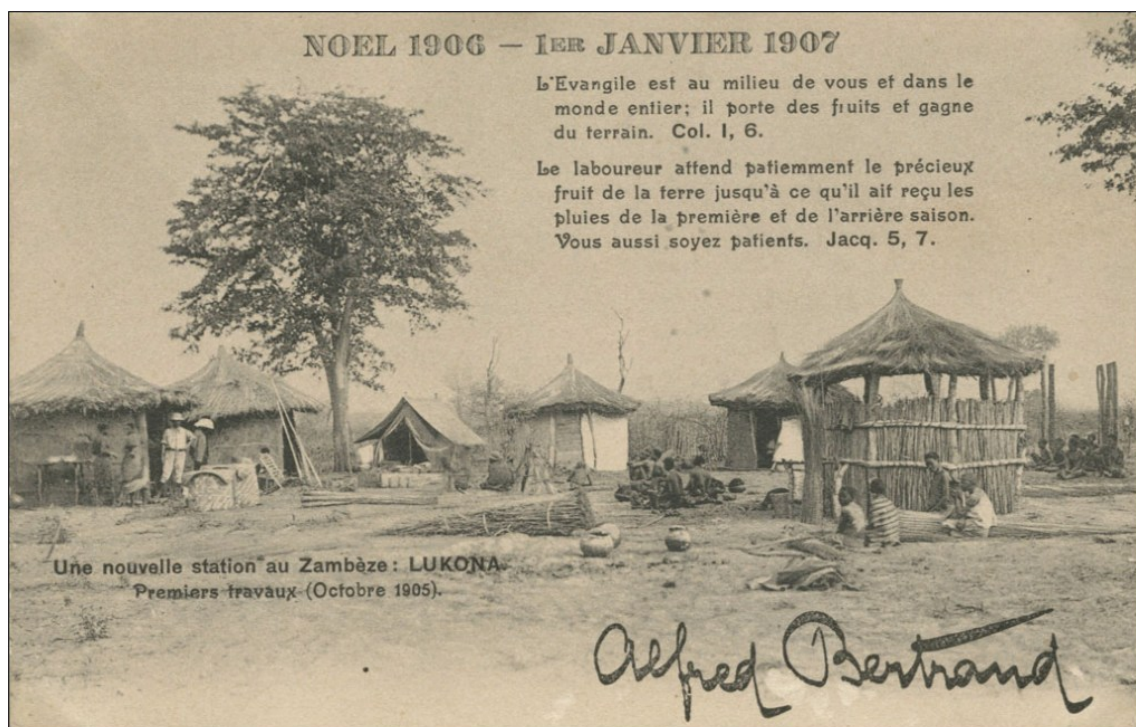
This is the third of the Bertrand Christmas cards. It is sent to the President of Zambesia Saint-Jean-de-Maruéjols-et-Avéjan, France. About eight have been reported - all slightly different. This one is signed by Bertrand and Edouard Favre. It is cancelled on 23 December, 1904.

The publisher is not named on the card. It features the Reverend François Coillard in his canoe on the Upper Zambesi. The card contains a Biblical quotation. Undivided back.



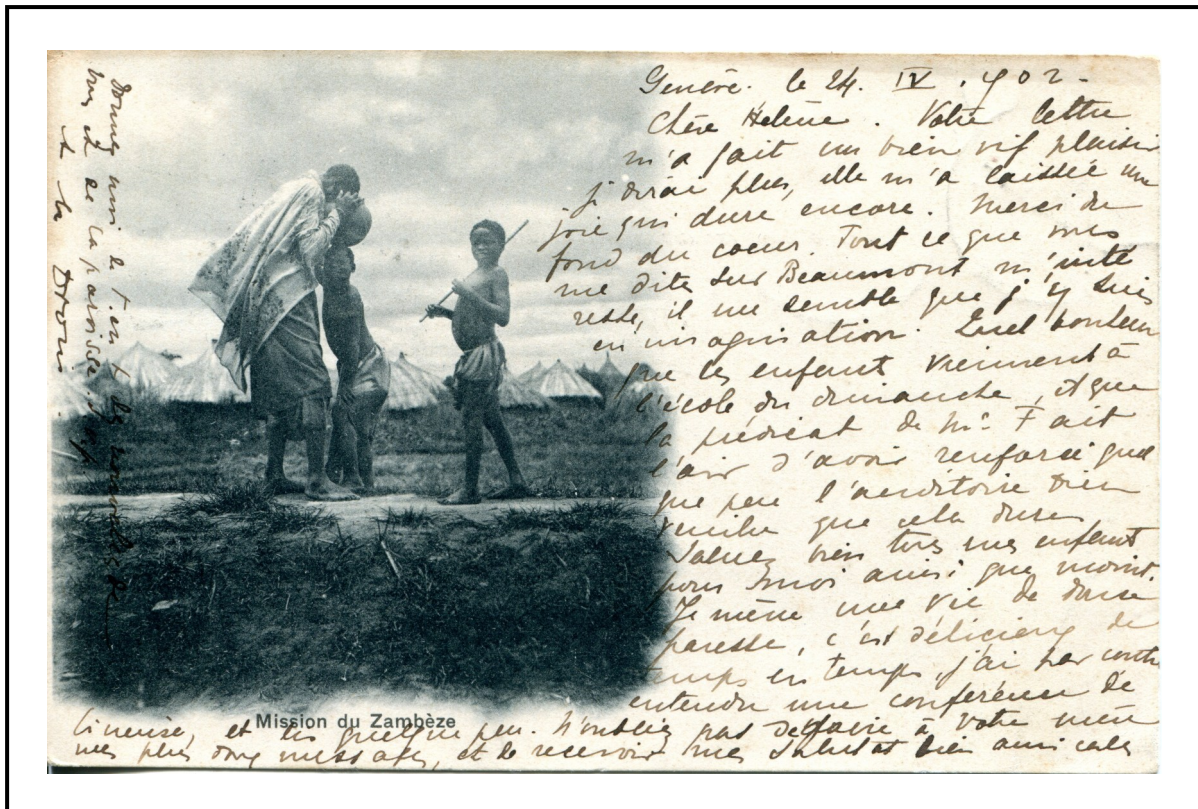
This is the fourth of the Bertrand Christmas cards. It is sent to the President of Zambezia in Alais (Alès) Gard in France. This is the only one known. This one is signed by Bertrand and Edouard Favre; it has Favre's handstamp on it. It was cancelled on 26 December, 1905.

The publisher is not named on the card. It features the Victoria Falls. Undivided back.

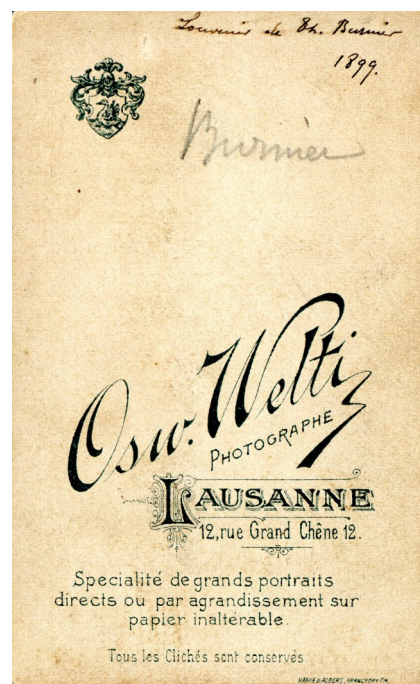
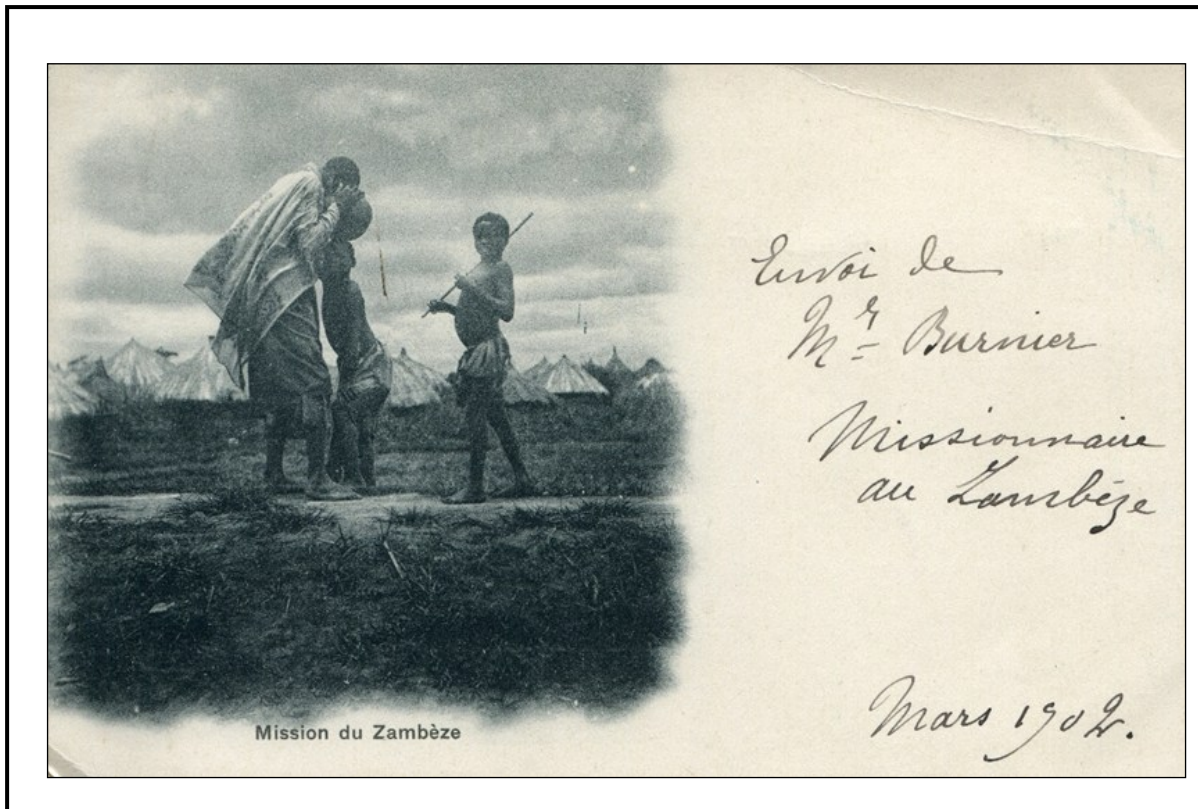


This is the fifth of the Bertrand Christmas cards. It is sent to Versailles, France. This is the only one known. This one is signed by Bertrand and has Edouard Favre's handstamp. It was cancelled on 25 December, 1906.

The publisher is not named on the card. It features the mission station at Lukona which was opened in 1905. This card now has a divided back.



A 'series' of three cards is known published from circa 1902. The images were all taken from photographs by the Rev Theo Burnier who went to Barotseland in March, 1899, from Lausanne, Switzerland. This card features one of the images. What makes it more important is that the sender is Mlle Helene Bertrand, a teacher, who joined the PMS mission in Barotseland in 1898 and left in 1917. The card is cancelled on 25 May, 1902, in Geneva - she was on leave at the time. The publisher was Julian frères, from Geneva.



Here is another example of this card, this time signed by Rev Theo Burnier whose was responsible for the photograph upon which the card was based. He has dated it May, 1902. The card is unused. Photograph of Reverend Theophile Burnier produced in Lausanne in 1899 - the year Burnier set off for Barotseland. Burnier has signed the back of the photograph. Three of these cards are reported, one used in Southern Africa (Basutoland).



The second image featured on this series. It shows Queen Mowea with the Reverend François Coillard and the Reverend Louis Jalla. (There is another missionary, most obscured!) As mentioned before, these cards are taken from photographs by the Reverend Theo Burnier. Here is the original photograph. One other missionary has been cropped out! Five examples of this card are reported.



Mission du Zambèze - Une réception chez Lewanika



The third image featured on this series. It shows King Lewanika meeting with various PMS missionaries in Lealui. Technology allows us to enlarge the image so one can identify some of those present at this 'audience'. This postcard is unused. Six copies - mint and used are known.

Thereafter?

1. The Paris Missionary Society through their Zambezas (support groups) were to publish number series' of postcards up until the 1950s.
2. Very few, around ten, are known used from Barotseland. Most were used in Europe.
3. There are five known real photograph postcards used from Barotseland.
4. The PMS station at Livingstone, the Old Drift, was featured in the E. Peters of Cape Town published postcards which appear post 1905. It is featured along with a map of the mission stations.

