

Present and future challenges to the Church in Africa - with special reference to the Church in Sudan

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To Susan in appreciation for who you are and how you willingly serve the Church of Sudan with me

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Abstract

Sudan has been prominent in the international news for the last few years. While the media's focus has largely been on the different civil wars and abuse of human rights I desire to highlight the dramatic growth of Christianity in Africa's largest country. The Church in Sudan has a long, rich history with many lessons for the wider Church. During the last five decades she played a crucial role in a society where most other community structures were destroyed or destabilized. In the last thirty years Christianity in Southern Sudan against all odds expanded tremendously. The way it happened is amazing, humbling and worth reading.

In order to better understand the problems, needs and challenges of the present day Church in Sudan I painted a broad background picture of Christianity in Africa. First, I discussed the three waves of Christianity that rolled over Africa. Many lessons, positive and negative, can be learned from the way Christianity was presented during each wave. The way mission work was seen and done by mostly Western missionaries and perceived by their African mission objects impacted the Church in Africa in a significant way.

One important fact was that both missionaries and African Christians played important roles in establishing Christianity on the continent. Contributions of both groups must therefore be valued. However, while the work of Western missionaries received most of the attention for many years it is important to recognize that it was often the zeal and efforts of African Christians that made the biggest difference.

After painting a broad African background I focused on Christianity in Sudan. Christianity's roots in Sudan go back to the time of the kingdoms of Kush, Meroe, Nubia and Alodia. The Christian kingdom of Nubia was especially prosperous for many centuries, but eventually it faded away due to various internal and external factors. Valuable lessons pertaining to the reasons that it happened assist the Church today in not making the same mistakes.

In the late nineteenth century the modern mission movement was started. It continued until the emergence of an indigenous Church in Sudan. Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries sowed the seeds of the gospel at great personal cost in ground that often

seemed barren and resistant. Men like Casolani, Comboni and Geyer poured their lives into Sudan on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestants had their champions in people like the Anglican missionary Archibald Shaw, the American Mission missionaries Thomas Lambie and Don MacClure, and the Trudingers and Lunn's who worked with SUM. The Forsberg couple who represented SIM in the Southern Blue Nile region gave themselves to the Uduk, but also made mistakes that highlight the importance of recognizing cultural differences when doing mission work. Reflecting on the work done by missionaries who were children of their time can be helpful to missionaries involved in present day Sudan.

With time an indigenous church emerged from the missionary efforts. The process was not without its problems. One challenge that occurred and that is often found where mission work is done, is the giving over of power and responsibility by the missionaries to the local church leadership. In Sudan missionaries were reluctant to "work themselves out of their job", but in the end they were forced by the government to leave the country. Civil war also broke out, causing whole communities to flee to neighbouring countries, government-controlled cities or deep into the bush. Although the indigenous Church faced many difficulties and opposition she did not only survive, but actually flourished in many cases. The Church was often the key factor that held people together who would otherwise have perished. Records of immensely brave and devoted Christians with little education who worked in extremely difficult conditions give testimony to what can be achieved in the broken world we live in.

In the period between 1972 and 1983 a fragile peace existed. During this period many missionaries and Christian organizations returned to Southern Sudan. They desired to serve the young Church but unfortunately often took control of their own projects. Fortunately several missionaries realized the importance of leaving the power in the hands of local leadership. The Arenson couple working among the Murle is a good example.

When civil war broke out again in 1983 the Church went through a very difficult time. Instead of declining, as many expected, tremendous growth took place. In some cases, like in the Bor area one reason was the disillusionment with the traditional deities. The

gospel message gave hope to people who had nowhere to turn. In other areas Sudanese evangelists with very little education became leaders of large people movements while most of the official church leadership fled to neighbouring countries.

In the late nineteen eighties the international world became aware of the "silent war" in Southern Sudan. Pressure from outside led to the establishment of Operation Lifeline Sudan. It also opened the opportunity for Christians outside of Sudan to enter the country. Valuable services were rendered, but again too much control remained in the hands of the expatriate missionaries and mission organizations. The involvement of many expatriates who had access to large amounts of money had positive and negative results. Some of these results are discussed in order to prevent the repetition of similar mistakes.

With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 9 January 2006 a whole new dynamic came into place. The Church has to adapt to the many changes that have occurred in the country. She now has to represent God in a milieu of transition with all its unique challenges. In order to fulfill her role the Church has to look at her history, be realistic about her present condition and reflect on the many challenges facing her as she tries to be faithful to her Lord. Several of these challenges are highlighted and some suggestions are made. It is my prayer that future historians will be able to write about a Sudanese Church that has grown in all aspects and has made an impact on the Sudanese society at large.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why this thesis?

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tm 2:2).

I had the privilege to be involved in theological training of African church leaders in South Africa, Swaziland, Mozambique, Kenya and Sudan during the past fourteen years. In the past ten years I had contact with Southern Sudanese church leaders on different levels. It has been a blessed and fulfilling experience.

As a staff member of Open Doors tasked with the training of church leaders in Southern Sudan my most intimate contact was with leaders who either lived in Southern Sudan or in refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda. I was directly involved with the training of at least two hundred Sudanese church leaders belonging to at least nine Protestant denominations and coming from eleven Sudanese tribes. Many of them were young men with the energy, restlessness and desire to advance in life that characterizes this age group.

Although the church leaders-cum-students treated me as their teacher, I often felt like their student! The ever-rotating roles of being a teacher and a student of Sudanese believers stimulated me to think of how I could improve the theological training I conducted in Southern Sudan. I became convinced that the church leaders I taught deserve the best training possible.

As I continued teaching I had a growing realization that the training of Sudanese church leaders had to be adapted to suit the Sudan context better. This motivated me to do research on the history of Christianity in Africa and specifically in Sudan. Without a basic understanding of such history it would be difficult to make the necessary adaptations to the present teaching materials.

The needs in Southern Sudanese are enormous. Many Sudanese Christians over the years have given themselves to alleviate the spiritual and other needs of their fellow countrymen. They must receive proper acknowledgement and appreciation. One way of recognizing their dedication is by putting it on record. Expatriate missionaries have also been part of the Sudanese scene for a long time. It is important to research what role they played in the establishment of the Church in Sudan. Expatriates who are at present involved with the Church in Sudan can also benefit from knowing the positive and negative contributions made by their predecessors.

Concerning the contributions of both Sudanese and expatriate Christians I feel it is important to search for ways on how good relationships between the two groups can be established and maintained. Expatriate involvement affected the relationship between pastors and their congregations. Pastors or key church leaders are normally the link between the churches on the ground and expatriate visitors. They often receive material gain from such contacts. Gifts are given out of compassion and with the best of intentions. It is also of great help to pastors with little financial resources.

However, the general church members drew their own conclusions from what they saw and heard. They came to believe that their pastors have access to huge “money reservoirs”. The result is that they expect the pastors to take care of them in material ways instead of them taking care of their pastors so that the latter could spend all their time in giving their members spiritual nourishment. This is a sad by-product of well intended outside help.

Sudan is in a crucial time of transition and the situation is all the time becoming more complex. After more than two decades of civil war the country must now be developed as a country at peace. Sudanese who left the country during the war years have also started to return and they have their own ideas on how to manage the country. These dynamics will increasingly affect the political, religious and socio-economical arenas of Sudan. Concerning the Church pastors who received their training abroad will for instance challenge the largely untrained pastors who shepherded their flocks through the years of war for the leadership positions. It will inevitably lead to tension.

Manifold challenges daily confront the Sudanese Church with the reality in which she

must fulfil her task of presenting Christ to the world. It is encouraging to see how many leaders seek ways on guiding and preparing the Church to stand up to the challenges. One important challenge that deserves special attention is relevant, actual training that is based on a proper understanding of Christianity in Sudan, past, present and future. By writing this thesis I hope to contribute in a small way.

1.2 Relevance of the subject

Sudan may be described as a “buffer area” in the African continent. It is strategically situated between the so-called Muslim North and Christian South. Such a statement is of course an over-simplified description of Africa’s religious situation. Yet it cannot be denied that Sudan is in many ways the geographic border where “Muslim Africa” meets with what can mainly be described as traditional and Christian Africa. For this reason alone any mission research on this area automatically has relevance and importance for missions in Africa.

The effect of insecurity, instability and suffering on Christianity in Africa is worthy of research since it is a present reality in many parts of the continent. Sudan’s civil war that lasted longer than two decades paradoxically brought a closer unity between tribes that previously lived in near-isolation of each other. This newfound unity had political and religious results. Young men of all parts of Southern Sudan became comrades in arms. In the refugee camps in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya there was voluntary and involuntary inter-tribal contact. Expatriates brought in much needed relief and became involved in Christian ministry as well.

It was during the very difficult war years that thousands of Southern Sudanese embraced Christianity. Young believers for example returned home from the refugee camps as evangelists. Through their efforts dramatic church growth took place. It is important that their life stories and the results of their ministry must be retained. It has the potential to impact future church planting strategies and efforts not only in Sudan but in other parts of the world as well.

Overzealous evangelistic efforts unfortunately did not always lead to the establishment of qualitative church growth. This reality must be acknowledged and dealt with by both the Sudanese Church and those involved with her. Ways must be sought of training young leaders theologically without inhibiting or quenching their spiritual zeal.

Since the wider Christian world became aware of the predicament of the Church in Southern Sudan many different churches and Christian organizations entered the country. They launched various programmes to help their brothers and sisters in need. Several programmes were aimed at alleviating the immediate needs created by the civil war. A lot of good came from it. Unfortunately a lack of strategic long-term planning and coordination as well as difficult logistic circumstances resulted in too many negative side effects. Insight in relief work is needed to prevent unnecessary tension and relationship strains.

With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 9 January 2005 the time has come to strategize more carefully and assist the Sudanese Church in her areas of need. The period up to 2011 when Sudanese will decide whether they want to remain one country or to vote for separation is a crucial period. Whatever decision is taken politically the spiritual implications will be significant. It is important that this window period be used to help the Church in Sudan preparing for a challenging future.

1.3 Research problem

Christianity grew tremendously in Africa in the last century. In order to gain insight in how it happened, it is necessary to have a general historical overview of Christianity in Africa. The overview will span the entire period from the time when Christianity first came to Africa to the present day. Reasons for writing such an overview are to discover the mistakes made in the past and to build on the positive lessons learnt over many centuries.

It is also important for expatriate missionaries working in Africa to understand the African perspective on mission and missions. For centuries Africa's inhabitants were on the

receiving end of mission efforts. The evaluation by African Christian scholars on mission history and the Western mission legacy gives valuable insight in how it is experienced. African scholars also developed their own theologies that included missiology as an important part of it. Missionaries with different cultural backgrounds can benefit by being aware of how Africans view mission and missions.

Christianity in Sudan is particularly important to the author. The bigger part of the thesis will therefore be devoted to mission work and the emerging of a local Church in Sudan. Such an overview will hopefully help both expatriate missionaries and Sudanese Christians to better understand the roots of the Church they want to serve.

After a long history of resistance against the Gospel the Church in Sudan has grown dramatically over the last three decades. Reasons for both the resistance and the eventual embracing of Christianity will be explored to see how it affects the Church in Sudan today. The role of both expatriate missionaries and Sudanese Christians in church growth will be discussed.

Civil war impacted Christianity in Sudan in different ways. On the one side it played a major role in church growth. It also created gaps in the continuing development of a mature Church. By reflecting on church growth and factors that stimulated and hindered it important insights can be gained.

On 9 January 2005 the civil war between the north and the south of Sudan officially came to an end. With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement a new era dawned. The Sudanese Church has the potential to be a major role player in creating a new, peaceful Sudan. There will be big and difficult challenges of various natures. Some of the main challenges must be highlighted with possible suggestions on how to deal with them.

Expatriates tend to be overbearing and controlling in their enthusiasm to help. Those involved in holistic Christian ministry must strive to build the local Church instead of reaching their own goals. They must be sensitive to help without “steering the boat” and wise in how to utilize their resources. Doing ministry in this way is difficult and often frustrating. However it is essential if they want to benefit the local Church in the long term.

One very important area where expatriates can serve is by being involved in relevant theological training. Knowledge of how Christianity came to Sudan and how it developed is necessary for deciding what to teach and how to teach it. Constant exploration of ways on how to help equipping the Church for her role in society must be undertaken. Special efforts must be made in trying to understand the needs and challenges of Sudanese church leaders. They are after all the people who will lead the Church! A missionary vision must also be cultivated.

Geographically Sudan has a strategic mission role to play in Africa. The country forms the border between the traditionally Muslim north of Africa and the southern part of the continent that is mostly a mixture of Christianity and traditional African religions. In many ways the Sudanese Church is uniquely placed and adapted to reach North Africa with the Gospel. Ways of encouraging the Church to take up this challenging task must be reflected on.

1.4 Aims and goals of the research

Mission is in the first place God's work. The very fact directly calls the Church as Christ's Body to be involved. It is therefore an important goal to define mission and specifically as being understood by African Christians.

When planning for the present and future it is necessary to learn lessons from the past. The author therefore aims at giving an overview of Christianity in Africa in general and then of Sudan in particular.

An understanding of the present realities of the Church in Southern Sudan needs to be taken into account when reflecting on the training of her leaders. Factors that stimulate and hinder church growth must be discovered and addressed where possible. After looking at the continent's Christian history with a focus on Sudan some assessments must be made of major challenges the Church has to address with the help of believers worldwide.

1.5 Methodology

Different research methods were used in this dissertation. In the first place existing literary resources were explored.

With regards to the recent history of the Sudanese churches trustworthy church leaders were interviewed. In August 2005 a meeting with key Sudanese church leaders and expatriates involved in theological training programs of Open Doors was arranged. Richard Morris a specialist in curriculum development facilitated the meeting. Important insights on the challenges facing the Sudanese Church, especially in the training of her leaders were gained.

Three consultations (two in Nairobi and one in Sudan) were planned specifically to bring Christian organizations and churches working in Southern Sudan together. Information gained during the meetings was used when discussing the role expatriates can play in assisting the Church in Southern Sudan.

The author is a participant observer of mission in Southern Sudan. His personal experience over the past fourteen years in different parts of Africa and especially in Southern Sudan will be added to the above in coming to conclusions and in making suggestions for the future.

1.6 Key definitions

1.6.1 Sudan

Sudan is the biggest country in Africa covering 2.5 million square kilometres. Geographically the country is very diverse. In the southwestern part the climate is sub-tropical while the far north is a desert region. The central part of South Sudan again boasts of the biggest swamp area in Africa and vast floodplains. At the capital city Khartoum the White Nile and Blue Nile converge and from there continue to flow as one river towards Egypt.

Due to its geography large parts of Sudan is sparsely populated. Civil war and the isolation of many areas make accurate statistics difficult to obtain. According to 2003 UN statistics Sudan's population was estimated at 33 610 000 people (<http://cyberschoolbus.un.org> 9 August 2006). In 2005 the figure rose to about 35 million (<http://news.bbc.co.uk> 9 August 2006). More than half of Sudan's population is classified as black and 39% as Arab. The remaining 8% consist of Beja and foreigners (<http://www.ethnicharvest.org> 9 August 2006).

Sudan is not only diverse in geography but also in terms of its population. Nilotic people like the Dinka and Nuer inhabit the floodplains where community life centred on cattle for generations. The pastoralist tribes are semi-nomadic. More to the south of the country agricultural communities live as subsistence farmers. Apart from rural communities there are cities in both the north and the south of the country.

Civil war caused many rural people to flee their home areas in search of safety. Large refugee camps grew around key cities like Khartoum, Juba and Malakal. Others left Sudan and started a new life in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. A whole sub-culture developed in the refugee camps where mostly young Sudanese came into contact with a world they knew very little about in the past.

President Omar al-Bashir and his two vice-presidents Salva Kiir and Ali Osman Taha rule a country with a history of continuous war. In January 2005 a Comprehensive Peace Agreement ended a 21-year long civil war between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA). During the war an estimated one and a half million Sudanese lost their lives. Most of the dead were Southern Sudanese (<http://news.bbc.co.uk> 9 August 2006).

About five million Sudanese lived as Internally Displaced Refugees or IDP's mostly around key cities and at least half a million went into exile abroad. Thousands of Sudanese are at present still living in refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda.

According to the Summer Institute of Linguistics there are 142 spoken languages in Sudan (<http://www.ethnicharvest.org> 9 August 2006). Arabic is the official language but Southerners are showing a great interest in English. Some of the main languages are Dinka, Nuer, Zande, Shilluk and Bari.

Islam is the major religion in the country. At some stage 70% of the population were Sunni Muslims while 25% of all Sudanese worshiped traditional gods and spirits. Only 5% of the population were Christians (<http://www.ethnicharvest.org> 9 August 2006). In the last two decades the situation has changed significantly. This is due to dramatic growth in Christian numbers. Some statisticians state that more than 10% of the population at present have embraced Christianity. There are also reports of a growing number of Muslims who convert to Christianity. The reinstitution of Sharia law in 1983 was one of the main reasons why civil war erupted again after a period of relative peace.

Sudan is blessed with huge quantities of oil. Unfortunately this blessing became a curse to thousands of civilians living in the oil rich areas. Government funded militias destabilized the oil regions in order to control the industry. A reluctance to share the wealth of natural resources increased tension between the government and southern civilians. Sadly several countries with an interest in new oil reserves turned a blind eye to the atrocities caused by their presence in the oil fields. Pressure by Christian and human rights groups has an impact. The Canadian oil giant Talisman was forced to sell its shares due to pressures from Canadian human rights groups. Most of the shares were bought by China.

1.6.2 Southern Sudan

When the term Southern Sudan is used in the thesis, it refers to the part of Sudan that lies south of the 12 degrees north line. It therefore includes the Nuba Mountains, Abyei and Southern Blue Nile. Historically South Sudan refers to the area south of the 10 degrees north line. I deliberately expanded the area of focus to include the three above-mentioned areas and therefore refer to the bigger area as Southern Sudan.

1.6.3 Mission as *Missio Dei*

David Bosch rightly warned that those who want to define mission must be careful not to do this too sharply or with too much self-confidence (1991:9). At the end of his book *Transforming Mission* he writes that mission is “a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship,

church planting, contextualization, and much more” (1991:512). All the mentioned areas are important in the Sudan context.

More in line with Africa’s love of broader descriptions he portrays mission in terms of six major events, namely Christ’s incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the Parousia (1991:512-518). Through this “pictorial definition” he tried to emphasize the centrality of the Triune God in mission and point out the many dimensions of this subject.

Mission is first of all *Missio Dei*. It is God being busy with fallen mankind. Karl Barth was one of the first theologians to state clearly that mission was primarily an activity of God. His thoughts developed and reached a decisive point at the Willingen mission conference in 1952. At this conference it was stated that mission flowed from the very nature of God. The “classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world” (Bosch 1991:390).

F Pierli describes this mission movement in a touching manner: “Mission stems from the heart of God, is rooted in the heart of the Good Shepherd, should reach out to the hearts of all human beings to covenant all of them with the heart of God and among themselves” (1998a: 55).

God is seen as a missionary God and mission is described not as an activity of the church in the first place, but as one of God’s essential characteristics. This missionary God moves through his church into the world, and this movement is the reason why the church exists. The conclusion of this was that “To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love” (Bosch 1991:390).

Western theologians of the twentieth century struggled with defining mission in a way that would fit the changing world they lived and worked in. They eventually summarized it as *kerugma* (proclamation), *koinonia* (fellowship) and *diakonia* (service) with *marturia* (witness) as the overarching concept.

Mission can thus be defined primarily as the sending activity of the Triune God that fully involves his Church as his instrument. The arena where mission takes place is the world and it becomes concrete through culturally appropriate proclamation, fellowship and witness.

1.6.4 Missions

Mission as we have seen is God's work done in and through his initiative (*Missio Dei*). The mission activities of the Church must be differentiated from this primary activity. The Church is active in missions. Her missionary activities must always be part of God's mission but it can never be equated with it. Buono adds: "The missions, as missionary activity, are true only in the measure to which they try to carry out the mission Dei, God's mission" (2006:79).

Missions therefore are the Church's participation in God's mission through various missionary activities. These activities can again be categorized under the titles of proclamation, fellowship and service.

1.6.5 Church and churches

Paul described the Church as God's household and the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tm 3:15). In Ephesians 5:23 he says that the Church is the body of Christ with Christ as the Head. Oliver Onwubiko defines the Church as "a community of faithful people in Christ mysteriously sustained by the Holy Spirit in the communion of the Father and the Son" (2001:406). This community of Christ-followers is spread all over the world yet it still can celebrate true unity in Jesus Christ

Acknowledging the universal character of Christ's Body the author will capitalized the word 'Church' when referring to this Body as represented in all the different denominations together. When the word is not capitalized it refers either to specific denominations or to local congregations.

CHAPTER 2

THREE MISSION WAVES THAT ROLLED OVER AFRICA

2.1 Humble beginning of the worldwide Church

Christianity's humble beginning did not betray its future as a worldwide religion having adherents belonging to all levels of society and who live on all the world's continents. One man Jesus with a handful of followers travelled in Palestine preaching, teaching, healing and exorcising demons. A big part of Jesus' ministry on earth was teaching. He continuously taught his disciples in various ways and in various places most of all by being an example to them.

Jesus taught his disciples very important facts concerning God's plan for the world. In Mt 28:19-20 we read how He sent his disciples on a mission with a worldwide scope: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." In Acts 1:8 He again told his disciples that they would receive divine power and then would take the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

After Jesus' resurrection his disciples awaited the promised coming of the Holy Spirit. When He came on Pentecost Day the immediate result was new boldness in the lives of the disciples. Peter gave his famous "Pentecost Day" sermon and three thousand new converts were added to the existing number of believers. Some of these people came from Egypt and Libya (Ac 2:10). Africa, therefore, was included in the very first expansion of the Christian faith!

2.2 First wave of Christianity in Africa

2.2.1 Persecution and expansion

Jesus had predicted that his followers would suffer persecution. This indeed happened. However instead of stopping the gospel message from spreading it sped up this process. “Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went” (Ac 8:4). It was during this time of persecution that Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch (Ac 8:26-39). It was the first “definite record of an African becoming a Christian convert” (Groves 1948:34). As we shall see in the next chapter the Ethiopian eunuch might have been a Nubian and therefore the first Sudanese Christian.

Leaders naturally played an important part in the spread of Christianity. It is important to understand that the role of lay Christians was just as significant. Stephen Neill makes the following observation: “The Church of the first Christian generation was a genuinely missionary Church...the Church could count on the anonymous and unchronicled witness of all the faithful...Where there were Christians, there would be a living, burning faith, and before long an expanding Christian community” (Neill 1987:21-22).

Concerning the spread of Christianity in Africa the roots of which can be found in four regional churches namely in Egypt, North Africa, Nubia and Ethiopia.

2.2.2 Egypt

Tradition has it that the apostle Thomas stayed for a while in Alexandria on his way to India and that John Mark did active evangelistic work in Egypt. While this cannot be discounted it can also not be taken as established facts (Groves 1948:35). The first recorded fact about Christianity in Africa is the establishment of the episcopate of Demetrius in Alexandria at the end of the second century. Baur records that there was rapid church growth under Demetrius’ leadership (2005:23).

Christianity in Egypt developed along two lines. The Greek-speaking believers in Alexandria and other towns around the Nile Delta were children of the Roman Empire. They adopted the Empire's cultural and religious views. This group approached Christianity through reason and tried to present their faith in a logical and reasonable manner to Christians and non-Christians alike. Christian African thinkers like Clement and Origenes established and taught in the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria. Their target audience was the more educated citizens who were grounded in Greek philosophy (Groves 1948:36-37). Origenes and his colleagues might not have crossed geographical borders to take the gospel to completely unevangelized areas. They did succeed in drawing non-Christians with active, inquiring minds to the Gospel.

The second line of Christian development in Egypt occurred among the native population who were steeped in the cult of Osiris. This group could find clear parallels between Osiris who had overcome death after being slain by Evil and the story of Christ. Both the Osiris cult and Christianity offered hope for the future. While the similarities made the native Egyptians receptive to the gospel message it also held the danger of syncretism. Christians in cities like Alexandria used Greek while Egyptian languages became the language of the Church in the rural parts.

Church expansion took place at such a rate that political leaders became alarmed. Emperor Septimius Severus tried to prevent further growth in 202 by prohibiting any new conversions to Christianity and Judaism. When this edict was not obeyed severe persecutions broke out.

Another wave of persecution broke over Africa's Christians in the time of Maximin. Persecution however did not stop the Church from growing. Groves writes: "No section of the hard-pressed Christian fellowship held a prouder record than did the Egyptian Christians under their fiery trial. As in apostolic days, so now dispersion through persecution led to the further expansion of the Church" (Groves 1948:38). By the year 320 about one hundred bishops from Egypt attended a Church synod. The number of bishops alone testifies to the tremendous growth that had taken place.

When Constantine in 313 became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire Christianity became a tolerated religion. In 381 it became the state religion. Christianity's change in

status radically impacted its character and view of mission. The price of becoming a Christian was not as high as before and non-believers became interested for various reasons. Neill summarizes the change well: "...Christianity was fashionable, and the majority of men, then as now, found it convenient to follow the fashion" (1987:46).

About the same time the monastic movement started to develop. Baur comments that "Monasticism made Egypt a country of living saints" (2005:24). Unlike the first hermits who lived an isolated life in deserts Pachomius organized monastic life in such a way that it became a communal affair. Christians from further down south on the African continent visited the hermits for spiritual counsel while Pachomian monks became "a useful and appreciated labour force" (Baur 2005:24) through their services to farmers.

Syncretism unfortunately infiltrated Egyptian Christianity in the fourth century. Groves quotes Harnack's estimate of the situation: "Christianity in Egypt more than anywhere else perhaps ... [A] djusted itself to certain cardinal traits of the old national religion ... If the Egyptians were for the most part Christians by the middle of the fourth century, then they had created a sort of national religion for themselves out of the new religion by grafting on the latter to the cravings and the remnants of the old" (1948:41).

Fortunately the story continues more positively. Mark Shaw writes that this period of syncretism was followed by the emergence of mature churches: "The signs of an indigenous Christianity rooted in the language and life of the people were everywhere evident, including Coptic-speaking clergy and Coptic liturgies together with Scripture translations" (2000:38).

2.2.3 Abyssinia or present day Ethiopia

Christianity was not limited to Egypt. Early in the fourth century two young Christians from Tyre became stranded in Ethiopia after the ship they had been travelling with got shipwrecked. Groves gives another account on the authority of one Rufinus who claimed to have heard the story directly from Aedesius (1948:52). He writes that the ship was not wrecked but that it put to harbour to get necessary supplies and that hostile people killed everybody except Aedesius and Frumentius.

The two boys were taken as slaves to the king's court where they succeeded in winning his favour. Eventually Frumentius gathered together a small community of Christians who were mostly traders. After his release he went to seek a spiritual leader for his flock in Alexandria. Bishop Athanasius did not give him another person but instead ordained Frumentius as bishop. Frumentius continued to serve as the head of the Ethiopian church until his death. In 333 the Ethiopian King Ezana of Axum gave Christianity the status of an official religion in Ethiopia.

2.2.4 Nubia

In 542 two missionaries Julian from Constantinople and Theodore from Egypt began evangelizing work in Nubia. In 569 the bishop of Nobatia also reached out to the people of Nobatia. Detail of the church in Nubia will be given in detail in Chapter 3.

2.2.5 North Africa

Maghreb or North Africa of ancient history is today known as the countries of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Christianity in this part of Africa became manifested in a Church of the elite. It produced brilliant scholars like Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine and experienced amazing church growth. However she failed to reach the ordinary Berber and Punic masses. The top layer of society filled the leadership positions of the Romanized Latin-speaking church while no Christian literature was developed in the local Berber languages. Shaw writes that the history of this church is: "... a sober reminder of the fragility of a faith insufficiently rooted in the life of the people" (2000:38).

At first the Church consisted mostly of members coming from the lower classes of society (Baur 2005:27). Learned theologians like Tertullian began to develop a Latin theology around 180 but Cyprian also records it in 250 that many priests and even bishops were illiterate. This signified that an educated leadership was not the norm. When the severe persecutions of the Church came to an end a leadership from the wealthier educated upper class of society took control. The Latin they used was often not understood by the Berbers in the rural areas. Questions about the moral standards of the urban leadership led to further tension.

In 311 the Donatists broke away from the Catholic Church because they could not accept what they saw as serious compromises in the church leadership. The Donatists became a powerful rival church for a century before the government forcefully suppressed them. Baur writes: “Tragically enough, its deepest cause was the idealistic longing in the Church for true holiness, especially of priests” (2005:28).

Augustine was arguably the greatest theologian of his time. It was during his lifetime that the Church in North Africa reached its peak. By then the Catholic Church had 700 bishoprics! However, most priests flocked around their bishops in the influential cities. The rural areas were left largely unattended. A lack of adequate evangelism and discipling of the local population would later be given as one of the major reasons for the fall of Christianity in North Africa.

At the end of Augustine’s life the Vandals attacked North Africa and took control. The Vandals were Arian Christians and they persecuted believers who held to the beliefs of the Catholic Church. During the time of Vandal rule very little theological activity occurred (Baur 2005:29). In 534 Emperor Justinian defeated the Vandals and restored the Catholic Church. For about a century and a half Catholic Christians enjoyed spiritual freedom. The situation changed again shortly thereafter with the emergence and advance of Islam.

2.2.6 Emergence of Islam and its effect on Christianity in Africa

Christianity continued to spread and establish itself everywhere. With the emergence of Islam in the early seventh century the situation changed radically. Moving from Arabia the Muslim army invaded and captured large areas that had a Christian heritage.

Africa did not escape their attention. An Arab army invade Egypt in 640 and in 642 Alexandria came under Muslim domination. In 697 Carthage was captured and its upper class population fled *en masse* to Europe. Those who could not escape to the north retreated into the southern desert areas (Groves 1948:83). Where there were more than three hundred bishops in the region before the invasion only about thirty remained after the large-scale exodus. In a short time all of northern Africa with its rich Christian history became Muslim territory.

The shift of religious power has had consequences for the Church from then onwards up to the present time. Hellenized Christians lived in the Greek-speaking cities of Egypt. With the invasion many of them fled. Thousands of native Egyptians converted to Islam mostly with economic motives since Muslim converts did not have to pay taxes. A smaller group of Christians remained in Egypt and refused to let go of their faith. They became known as Copts.

Although the Muslim invaders generally tolerated the Copts they experience discrimination. According to the Covenant of Omar they were viewed as second-class citizens who had to pay taxes while those who had embraced Islam were exempted from this economic burden. Copts could also not construct new churches or even repair old buildings. Public worship was forbidden. Baur observes “This century-long oppression slowly reduced Egyptian Christianity to a minority” (Baur 2005:26).

Too many conversions with the accompanying tax exemption made Caliph Omar II state that converts would in future have to pay poll tax. In 744 the governor of Egypt again promised tax exemption to people who would accept Islam and 24 000 Christians apparently responded (Shaw 2000:38).

Discontent at times led to revolts by Christians, which in turn resulted in periods of persecution. Churches would be destroyed and believers would be attacked and oppressed. In the eighth century after Muslim invaders entered Egypt persecution reached a peak. Fifty-nine churches and many monasteries were destroyed (Groves 1948:77). Interestingly enough there were no large-scale attempts in the first few centuries by the Muslims to eradicate Christianity in Africa.

Pastoralist Berber tribes who inhabited North Africa to the west of Egypt were initially hostile to the Muslim invaders. Muslim leaders like Dinar and Hassan gradually succeeded in winning them over to Islam. A Berber chief called Tarik converted to Islam and became governor of Mauritania. He led a Berber force into Spain in 711 and conquered the greater part of it in a surprisingly short time. Groves comments “... it was the conquest of Spain by joint Berber and Arab arms that set the seal on the Berber conversion to Islam” (1948:81). Today the Berbers are devout Muslims.

Muslim-Christian relationships in other parts of the world were much more violent than in Africa. Since the Church in Europe had a powerful voice in the political arena she involved herself in many politically related issues. One of the most tragic enterprises the Church had undertaken was the organizing of Crusades. Muslims were portrayed as a threat to the Christian truth that had to be opposed by all means. The goal was to kill Muslims rather than to convert them. There were only a few exceptions of people like Ramon Lull and Franciscus of Assisi who had a more Christian approach.

The negative view of Muslims led to the practise of the so-called missionary wars or crusades. Seven crusades were organised in the Name of Jesus Christ. It resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands. In 1099, for instance, crusaders brutally killed about 70 000 Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem. They did it in the name of Christianity. Not surprisingly, the lasting legacy of the crusades was bitterness in the hearts of Muslims that still affects their view of Christianity today (Neill 1987:114).

Ramon Lull had a different approach. He went to North Africa four times to preach to the Muslims. He knew that it would be a dangerous mission but his desire to win some of them over to Christ compelled him to go. In 1315 during his last North African visit he was so roughly treated that he died of his injuries. Franciscus of Assisi also wanted to convert rather than kill Muslims. In 1219 he presented the Gospel to the Sultan of Egypt. Unfortunately his efforts did not yield his desired spiritual harvest.

2.2.7 Decline and eventual disappearance of the North African Church

Apart from the Coptic Church in Egypt and the Church in modern day Ethiopia, Christianity in Africa faded into near non-existence for many centuries. Even the Coptic Church experienced great apostasy. Economic interests, periodic persecution and the inability of a Christian man to get a Muslim wife were some of the main external reasons for Christian conversion to Islam. Internally the Church lost much of its strength due to strife, divisions and inadequate pastoral care by church leaders. All these reasons are important to keep in mind today in order to prevent similar mistakes re-occurring.

North Africa enjoyed a period of amazing theological development and church growth. In the time of Augustine there were seven hundred bishoprics! However only between thirty and forty still existed at the end of the seventh century. The few surviving bishoprics

declined to about six in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. By the fifteenth century there was evidence of only one small indigenous Christian community, but after that it seemed as if the Church disappeared completely (Groves 1948:82). How could such a seemingly thriving church decline in such a tragic way? Several reasons are given.

The Vandal wars that preceded the Muslim invasion caused a lot of devastation in North Africa. This combined with struggles between the Catholics and Arians with a severe persecution of the Arians had already weakened the Church considerably by the time the Muslims arrived.

The failure to reach the Berber tribes with the Gospel played a major role in the disappearance of the Church. The failure must be laid at the doors of both the Egyptian and North African churches. Some mission efforts were made by the Church in Egypt to reach the upper class in cities like Alexandria. However, conflict with the Latinized Church in Carthage apparently made them not to show an interest in evangelizing the region west of Egypt. The Church in Carthage also did not try in any active way to reach the pastoralist Berbers to their south.

When the Christian upper class of Carthage fled to Europe the Muslim invaders found Berber tribes largely unevangelized. The few Berber Christians had very little depth and could be swayed easily. Groves draws the following lesson from the North African Church's lack of serious evangelism: "If the interpretation we have set forth of the historic situation be correct, then there is no more vivid warning that to fail to share the faith with all around is to let it die" (1948:89).

The failure to indigenize the gospel attributed to the fact that few Berbers had accepted Christianity. Baur asks if it is possible that the Church in Carthage did not see any need for the gospel to be proclaimed in the Berber language because it was barbarian in comparison with their Latin (2005:29-30). No portions of Scripture or other Christian material was translated in Berber. It shows that another policy in regards to the local population was followed here as in Egypt (Groves 1948:84).

Leadership issues also played a significant role. Most church leaders came from the cultural upper class. Priests flocked around their bishops in the cities instead of staying in

the rural areas. When Carthage fell most of the bishops and other church leaders deserted. It left the Church in the region with very few ordained leaders.

2.3 Second wave of Christianity in Africa

The Muslim invasion of North Africa and especially of Egypt blocked Europe's established trade routes to the East. A desire to find alternatives led to voyages of discovery and accompanying Catholic missionary work on the African coastline. Inspired by their monarch Prince Henry the Navigator, Portugal aggressively expanded their territory between 1450 and 1700 (Shaw 2000:39). Voyages of exploration were organized and funded by Prince Henry leading to the "discovery" of Africa. The western and eastern coasts of Africa became known in Europe. This contact with Africa led to the second wave of Christianity on the "Dark Continent".

It was obvious to the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church that Christianity had to be taken to Africa's inhabitants. Permission was given to the Portuguese king in 1452 by Pope Nicholas V to conquer the territory in Africa belonging to Muslims and pagans (Baur 2005:47). In May 1493 Pope Alexander VI divided the 'new world' between Spain and Portugal. Apart from receiving exclusive trading rights the pope also told the Spanish king, and by implication the Portuguese monarch, to send God-fearing men to the new areas. They were tasked to instruct the indigenous people in the Catholic faith (Neill 1987:141-142). Not many years later other European nations started to enter the new world. They claimed that they too had a right to share in the profits.

The term mission received new meaning in this Age of Discovery. Christians in the West saw it as their right to send Church agents to distant colonies. Church envoys were called missionaries and the activities assigned to them were described as their mission.

2.3.1 Africa's West Coast

2.3.1.1 Guinea Coast

In 1462 Pope Pius II gave the task of evangelizing the people of the Portuguese Guinea Coast to the Franciscans. The Christianizing of Africa was not only on the hearts of the

church leaders. When the first European settlement was found at La Mina on the Guinea Coast in 1482 the whole Portuguese company gathered around an altar. They then prayed for the conversion of the native population and the prosperity of the Church (Groves 1948:123).

It soon became clear that some chiefs and kings desired mission work to be done in their areas. The chief of La Mina for instance was willing to accept the Christian faith if it would lead to profitable trade relations with Portugal (Groves 1948:123). His motives were obviously wrong as were those of other African chiefs who saw economic opportunities through their contact with the Portuguese. It did not stop Western Christians to share the Gospel as they understood it with them.

2.3.1.2 Benin

King Behemoui of Benin in 1485 requested a church to be planted in his kingdom. When he heard that choosing Christianity would have permanent consequences on his moral life he decided to delay his decision. Shortly thereafter he was defeated in a civil war and escaped to Lisbon. There he made his desire to convert to Christianity clear. In 1489 he and his 25 companions were baptized. When Behemoui returned to his home country Dominican missionaries escorted him to start a work among the Wolof people of Senegambia. Unfortunately relationships must have soured because Behemoui apparently expelled the missionaries a while later (Groves 1948:126).

2.3.1.3 Congo

In 1491 a Portuguese mission to the Congo was launched. First contact between the Portuguese and the Bakongo a few years earlier was not so positive. Both sides took hostages but all of them were treated kindly. The four Bakongo who were taken to Lisbon came back full of praise for what they have seen and heard. They also became the first Christian evangelists in their home land (Baur 2005:56).

King Nzinga Nkuwu and his eldest son were baptized after only a short time. The son took the name of Don Affonso at his baptism and he supported the whole mission effort

enthusiastically. Given the African understanding of their rulers the baptism of Nkuwu had significant meaning. In some sense it made his country officially a Christian country. Not all Nkuwu's subjects were comfortable with the Portuguese and the Christianity they had brought. Nkuwu himself quickly reverted to his old ways. Don Affonso stuck to his newfound faith. In order to counter rising instability Nkuwu sent his eldest son and the missionaries to an inland province while Don Affonso's half-brother Mpanzu received the privileged position next to the aged king.

When King Nkuwu eventually died Don Affonso decided to take back his rightful position as king. His small force was completely outnumbered by Mpanzu soldiers. They dropped to their knees to pray before the battle started and Mpanzu's forces immediately fled in panic. They apparently saw signs in the sky that terrified them. Don Affonso defeated Mpanzu's men and executed his half-brother (Baur 2005:57-58).

After the miraculous way that Don Affonso had received back his position as king he vigorously began to establish a Christian kingdom. He destroyed the traditional temple in Mbanza Kongo, the capital city of his kingdom and renamed it to become Sao Salvador (Shaw 1996:112). He also asked for new missionaries to come to Congo and sent young men to Lisbon for studies. Personally Don Affonso was an accomplished preacher.

Unfortunately the first missionaries who had arrived in 1508 lived immoral lives and thus became an embarrassment to the king. Baur quotes Don Affonso's complaint to the Portuguese king where he wrote: "Today our Lord is crucified anew by the very ministers of his body and blood" (2005:59). Others that followed, with the exception of three, were not any better.

In 1518 Don Affonso's son Dom Henrique was consecrated Titular Bishop. He had studied in Portugal. Two years after his consecration plans were made for him to return to Congo. Little is known about Dom Henrique's activities after his return to his homeland. In 1529 he was invited to visit Portugal. His main goal was to make arrangements for a Diocese of Congo to be established. Unfortunately he died before he could leave.

There is no doubt about the genuineness of Don Affonso's personal faith. Despite all his efforts "there is little evidence of radical change among the population" (Groves

1948:129). Thousands of baptisms were recorded and a generation later there were reports of many Christian villages. Doubts were often raised about the depth of Christianity in Congo. Don Affonso finally died in 1543 at the age of 85.

After his death Christianity in Congo declined. The Congolese Christian leaders asked for “zealous, not business-minded priests” (Shaw 1996:113). They had such negative experiences with people who were supposed to promote God’s kingdom but instead poured their energy into self-enrichment. Jesuit work that started in 1548 met with a lot of opposition due to soured relationships with the Portuguese trade community that became established in the capital city of San Salvador. The participation of missionaries in the slave trade placed an even greater strain on relationships. In 1515 they were finally expelled.

Capuchin missionaries started a new work in Congo in 1645. Baur comments that “The apostolate of some 440 Capuchins between 1645 and 1835 was by far the greatest missionary enterprise in Africa before the modern period” (2005:63). Shaw writes that they baptized about 600 000 people between 1645 and 1700. Most of these “converts” were children (1996:113). They also built many schools, conducted systematic evangelism programmes and established the Roman Catholic Church wherever they went. The Capuchins saw nothing positive in African traditional religion. They saw their work as a battle between God’s kingdom (which they directly identified with the Church) and Satan’s kingdom (which in their mind was very much present in Africa’s traditional religions).

All mission work was suppressed in 1834 by a new Portuguese government who had more interest in defending their economic interest than the Christian faith. Like in North Africa centuries those belonging to the noble class and who lived in cities mostly embraced earlier Christianity.

2.3.1.4 Angola and other countries on Africa’s west coast

Jesuit priests started mission work in Angola in the sixteenth century. Father Pero Ravares had a vision of establishing a network of Christian villages. He travelled tirelessly and supervised the teaching of 20 000 catechumens all over the Ndongo kingdom. He

valued his relationships with the local population more than his contact with Portuguese settlers. For this reason he avoided staying and eating with the latter.

Ravares' work was so successful that the Bishop of Luanda was allowed to place priests in the headquarters of the kingdom's four chiefs (Baur 2005:74). When Dutch colonists forcefully took control of Luanda in 1641 all the good work was destroyed. It signified the end of missionary work outside the Angolan capital except for a few sporadic efforts. In 1834 Christianity in Luanda was also dealt a deathblow when the Portuguese government issued a decree that all religious orders there had to be abolished.

At Matamba Queen Nzinga converted to Christianity twice. The second conversion lasted until her death and was characterized by her efforts to turn Matamba into a mission state. Between 1656 and 1665 many of her subjects accepted Christianity as well but upon her death her husband led his subjects back to their traditional religions.

The small Itsekeri Kingdom of Warri was formed in the kingdom of Benin. Warri's king invited Augustinian missionaries in 1570 to start a work in his kingdom. Thus a tradition was started of Warri rulers being Catholics. It seems that a lack of resident priests and the fact that Christianity was basically confined to the royal court prevented Christianity from developing into a strong religion.

2.3.2 Mission work on and from Africa's east coast

2.3.2.1 Mozambique

Catholic mission work started to spread to the continent's east coast as well. In 1506 three Catholic priests resided in Sofala. There is no record of any evangelism done by them or anyone else. However, about forty slaves were converted and baptized at Kilwa (Baur 2005:87).

In 1559 Gamba, the king of Tonga, requested missionaries to be sent to his kingdom after one of his sons had become a Christian. His headquarters was about 100 miles from Inhambane. Father Gonsalo da Silveira with another priest and a layman went to Gamba and baptized about 400 new converts in a matter of weeks. It seemed to da Silveira that

the kingdom as a whole was nearly won over to Christianity. He therefore left the work to Father Fernandes and continued his journey to the kingdom of Monomotapa.

Father Fernandes soon discovered that their first assumptions were false. Gamba and his people had strong roots in their traditional religion. When expectations of material gain through contact with the missionaries did not materialize relationships became sour. Fernandez nearly starved to death before he returned to Goa in India (Baur 2005:80).

In 1597 the grandson of Vasco da Gama visited the Kenyan coast in his official capacity of viceroy of India. He then sent Augustinian monks to take the spiritual care of believers on this part of Africa's east coast. A monastery with four fathers was opened in Mombassa and after only three years they could report that 1200 converts was baptized (Baur 2005:88). Father Diego de Spirito Santo worked at Faza and during his 30 years of ministry established good relationships between the local inhabitants and the Portuguese.

A series of unfortunate events in Mombassa resulted in the massacre of about three hundred Christians in 1631. Half of this number was an African believer. They had the opportunity to convert to Islam but stood firm to the end. The fact that these African believers were willing to die for their faith when the Portuguese soldiers were already killed proved that "for them being a Christian meant much more than being a friend of the Portuguese" (Baur 2005:90). On 13 December 1698 the Arabs finally defeated Portuguese forces after Fort Jesus had been besieged for 33 months. This defeat signalled the end of all missionary activity as well.

2.3.2.2 Monomotapa

Gold was the main attraction of the legendary kingdom ruled by its chief the *monomotapa* or *Mwene Mutapa*. For the pioneer missionary Father da Silveira the spiritual condition of the people was another motivating reason to visit the area. He landed in Sofala in 1560 and started his journey. On the way he baptized King Gamba with his whole family in the vicinity of Inhambane. At Sena a Portuguese post on the Zambezi River he had to wait for permission to proceed to the capital city of the *monomotapa*. While waiting he baptized about five hundred Africans who worked for the Portuguese (Groves 1948:134).

When Father da Silveira eventually reached the capital city of Monomotapa on 25 December 1560 he declined the gifts of gold, land and women. This unusual act endeared him to the *monomotapa* and opened his heart to da Silveira's message. Da Silveira shared his faith with the chief. It resulted in the conversion and baptism of the *monomotapa*, his mother and a number of important court officials. Many subjects of the monomotapa admired da Silveira's way of life. While living frugally he gave gifts given to him to the poor (Baur 2005:81).

Some Muslims traders saw the missionary as a threat to their interests and convinced the *monomotapa* that da Silveira was actually an enchanter and a spy. This led to his murder by strangling. Sadly no trace of Christian influence remained (Groves 1948:135).

In later years Dominican missionaries began a new work in the kingdom. A certain Gatsi Rusere invited missionaries to return to his kingdom. His son did not share his father's sentiments and allowed his people to take by force whatever they could from the foreigners. As can be expected it ended in war. Father do Espirito Santo gathered an army and defeated the *monomotapa*'s forces in battle. The new chief with his wives and noblemen were baptized by the Dominicans and placed in a position of power (Baur 2005:83).

The new *monomotapa* did not enjoy popular support. Kapararidze who was dethroned by the Dominicans led a revolt in which he defeated the mission force. Portuguese soldiers were then sent to punish the rebel king. A vicious battle followed during which the Portuguese gain the upper hand. Kapararidze's son was sent to Goa as a prisoner of war. There he became a Christian convert and a member of the Dominican Order. He was a very able preacher and eventually became the vicar of the convent of Santa Barbara in Goa. Groves quotes Theal in saying: "Fiction surely has no stranger story than this" (1948:137).

After Kapararidze's final defeat all subsequent *monomotapa* rulers became Portuguese puppets. Each time a new *monomotapa* was appointed he would be baptized. Instead of bringing his followers closer to Christianity it led to resentment. Too close cooperation between missionaries and the Portuguese government ruined a potentially fruitful mission field. Shaw remarks: "The ravages of the slave trade combined with the injustices of

Portuguese traders, colonial governors, and settlers destroyed the credibility of Christianity in the region. Once again a mission begun with great promise collapsed in failure” (1996:117).

2.3.2.3 Jesuits in Abyssinia or modern day Ethiopia

In 1557 the Jesuits began to work in Ethiopia, where the Orthodox Church had been established centuries earlier. Andrew de Oviedo and his accompanying priests were the first Catholic missionaries. Due to the king’s suspicions they could do little else but to take care of those believers who were already Catholics.

Pedro Paez had much more success. He first went through a severe trial. Pirates captured him while on his way to Abyssinia and he served as a galley slave for seven years. After his release Paez reached Abyssinia in 1603. His linguistic brilliance, patience and wisdom won him many friends there. Za Dengel became king during this time and Paez convinced him to become a Roman Catholic. Unfortunately the king was rash in his behaviour. His hasty arrogant ways led to rebellion and his death. A certain Susenyos became king in his place and in 1622 he also proclaimed his Roman Catholic faith in public (Groves 1948:140).

With the death of Paez and the appointment of Alphonso Mendez as his successor the situation changed drastically. Mendez was the opposite of Paez in many ways. Through his attitude he succeeded in alienating the king and his subjects from the Catholic faith. When the king abdicated and handed power to his son Fasiladas the latter realized he might have to face a civil war unless he took drastic action. In 1632 he expelled all Jesuits and restored the ancient Coptic church of Ethiopia (Shaw 1996:119).

Nine Capuchin missionaries tried to enter the country in two separate attempts. Of these nine missionaries seven paid with their lives while the other two returned home. Groves comments “The net result of the Jesuit mission was to render the Abyssinians bitterly hostile to the Roman Catholic Church” (1948:142).

2.3.3 Reasons for the failure of the second mission wave in Africa

In spite of great sacrifice on the side of several missionaries the second wave of Christianity broke over Africa only to fade away with very little long-term effect. There were several reasons for this.

First the links between Portuguese political authorities and the missionaries were too close. It stopped Christianity from following an independent course. Sanneh writes: “The fact that missionary ventures were promoted as the schemes of European kings also hampered their progress in Africa, because of the political price which would have to be paid by African rulers who accepted Christianity” (1983a: 52). It was impossible for the Africans to make a clear distinction between politics on the one hand and religion on the other. Groves correctly observes, “Any expansion of Christianity due to its identification with a particular political regime is likely to be temporary only and to wane with the regime ... When Portuguese power faded, Christianity faded too” (1948:143).

The selfish lifestyles of “Christian” Western traders that followed the trail blazed open by missionaries contradicted the gospel message that was preached. Together with the ongoing slave trade it harmed the cause of missions in a significant way. Shaw quotes a Roman Catholic spokesman in the early nineteenth century who said, “The greatest hindrance of missions is the slave trade, operated by the Christians of Angola. It renders our religion odious to the Africans who keep in mind their chains instead of seeing the freedom brought to them in Christ” (1996:124)

Another reason given by a Portuguese historian was that missionaries sent to the unhealthy climate of Africa were often of inferior quality. Of course there were many exceptions, but it seems that many of those who survived the climate “... were more active in the slave-trade than in saying mass or doing any priestly work” (Baur 2005:92). Several missionaries with pure motives died before they could do much in-depth ministry.

Mass baptisms without proper instruction were another reason for an “easy-come-easy-go” attitude towards Christianity. Africans were quick to accept the new faith but slow to implement its practical part in their daily lives. A habit of filling baptism registers with

hundreds of new names without bringing the converts to a proper understanding of what they profess to believe cannot but lead to mass “back-sliding” as well.

Christianity’s failure to last in this time can also be laid at the door of neglect of the vernacular and of local culture. In most cases the liturgy was conducted in Latin and worship done according to the Western pattern. Scripture was only in rare cases translated in the local languages. Western church rituals were used without explanation and resulted in misinterpretations. Livingstone in later years heard how some of his men remarked that “... they had seen the white men charming their demons” (quoted by Groves 1948:145).

Missionaries treated their African converts as if they had no spiritual background whereas their whole worldview was in essence spiritual. Having an individualistic perspective on life the missionaries fail to see the importance of the community in Africa. These neglects gave a foreign character to the Gospel hindering Christianity to take root in the hearts of the evangelized Africans (Baur 2005:94).

Sanneh observes it would be unfair and unrealistic to put all the blame for missionary failure on European factors. “There were real problems on the African side too” (1983a:52). African chiefs were willing to cooperate with Europeans when they perceived it would lead to economic benefit. However they found it very difficult to accept the demands of missionaries to give up polygamy and contact with their ancestral spirits. This would in their view endanger their positions as leaders. As long as the potential of economic and other benefits was there the chiefs and their followers would tolerate the Christian faith. However when expectations were not fulfilled Christianity was either rejected or allowed to fizzle out.

African religions were also a strong opposing force for the rooting and spread of Christianity. When a particular society experienced prosperity its leaders would be reluctant to accept a new foreign religion since the spiritual forces they followed proved to be sufficient. Angering them might have disastrous consequences. At times of political instability leaders were much more open to missionary efforts.

All the above-mentioned reasons resulted in fresh hopes being repeatedly “... shattered on the unyielding rock of African resistance” (Sanneh 1983a: 52).

2.4 Third mission wave in Africa

2.4.1 A trickle of mission activity in the seventeenth century

When the Reformation took place in the early years of the sixteenth century it changed the face of Christianity permanently. At first the Protestant churches were not actively involved in missionary work. It was only in 1634 that the first Protestant missionary, Peter Heyling, was sent by the German Lutheran Church to Ethiopia. He was an excellent linguist and Bible teacher. In the nearly twenty years that he was active in missionary work he translated the New Testament in Amharic and impacted the Orthodox Church in a significant way. A Turkish pasha apparently killed Heyling in 1652 (www.lcms.org 26 July 2006).

With the establishment of a Dutch settlement in South Africa in 1652 a new gateway to Africa was opened. Seen from a missionary perspective no focused work was done among the local inhabitants in the seventeenth century. Shaw comments that only sporadic evangelistic efforts were made. A few Khoisan converts were baptized as early as 1662 (1996:122).

Late in the seventeenth century, when the Reformation had stagnated into sterility the Pietistic movement injected Christianity with new mission zeal. They opposed the teachings of orthodoxy that paralyzed all mission efforts and initiated the concept of believers volunteering to do mission work. Through their zeal a small missionary effort in Africa was started. On the negative side the Pietists emphasized individual decisions over against group conversions. In later years African theologians criticized this individualistic approach, which was employed by the majority of Western missionaries. They pointed out that African society was very much a communal affair.

2.4.2 Revivals, the role of William Carey and the forming of mission societies

Revivals in the so-called Christian world played an important role in the promotion of missionary activities. Christian renewal became essential in the West and indeed burst on the scene in the eighteenth century. In the American colonies a series of revivals between 1726 and 1760 with Jonathan Edwards as its leading figure brought new life to the church. It was called the Great Awakening. Revival leaders emphasized the importance of the Bible and of a conversion experience. Christ's second coming was preached as an event that should be expected soon. Believers became very serious about how to live for God's glory and how to bring unbelievers to Christ. While these revivals did not lead to direct mission work it laid the foundations for it (Bosch 1999:278).

In England, George Whitefield, the Wesley brothers and other leaders with a burning zeal to reach the lost for Christ, led Scotland and Wales revival meetings. Those who found new life in Christ "lived in militant opposition to the kingdom of darkness and focused their efforts toward the realization of the transformation of the earth through the gospel" (Shaw 1996:131). Such efforts logically had to lead to renewed interest and involvement in missionary work.

From 1776 onwards churches in America experienced dramatic growth due to what was called the Second Great Awakening. This awakening reached its peak in 1797 and one of its main characteristics was its interest in and enthusiasm for mission.

The whole missionary movement also received new momentum with the challenges posed by William Carey, later known as the father of the modern mission movement. After his ordination in 1787 he began to promote the idea of worldwide missions. In 1792 he wrote a book "*Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathen*". P.D. Niles (1995) quoted him, saying: 'If we Christians loved men as merchants loved money, no fierceness of people would keep us from their midst.' (<http://www.religion-online.org> : 20 June 2006).

Carey's challenges to the Church stirred many hearts. It also stimulated mission-minded Christian leaders in the West to form mission societies. Carey himself was instrumental in the forming of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. In 1795 members of the Church of

England joined by Evangelicals, Nonconformists and Methodists formed the London Missionary Society. The Netherlands Missionary Society was formed in 1797 followed by the Church Missionary Society and Religious Tract Society in 1799. In 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society came into being and in 1810 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed. All these societies had one thing in common, namely to take the gospel message to those who had not heard it yet. Africa the so-called Dark Continent became a focus point of mission work.

2.4.3 Effect of the anti-slavery movement on missions in Africa

“The greatest single factor that was at the origin of the African missions and promoted *the work of evangelization* for many decades was *the anti-slavery movement*” (Baur 2005:109). Since most slaves came from Africa, Africa was the continent that in many ways benefited most from the work of men who dedicated their lives to the abolishment of slavery.

John Venn became rector in Clapham, London, in 1792. He gathered a group of wealthy and influential evangelicals together urging them to make their faith more practical and activist. One of the major areas on which this group focused was slavery. William Wilberforce with the backing of other members of the Clapham Sect led the campaign against slavery. He and others used their position in parliament to lobby against the traffic in human beings. They used the power of the press, educated the public on this topic, distributed evangelical literature and motivated evangelical preachers to expound on this topic (Groves 1948:181). Granville Sharp was studying law with the one purpose of abolishing slavery. He gained popular support by defending and winning the cases of two slaves who were brought from America to England and whose masters wanted to return them to America (Shaw 1996:133). In May 1787 he became the first chairman of the newly formed Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

In 1833 all the efforts of those who opposed slavery because of their Christian conviction finally gained victory. The Abolition of Slavery Bill was approved. It declared, “all slaves in British dominions were to be freed on August 1, 1834” (Shaw 1996:136).

Thomas Buxton led the anti-slavery movement at this time and he believed that slavery could only be rooted out completely if Africa’s economy could be transformed. Through the

resettlement of free slaves and by establishing trade networks he envisioned a new, civilized Africa. Progress in his thinking was the magic wand that would transform the Dark Continent.

2.4.4 Mission in West and Central Africa

2.4.4.1 Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone was chosen as the first place to resettle freed slaves. In 1787 more than 400 settlers, most of whom were freed slaves coming from London, established a Christian community. Sadly within three months of their arrival a third of the newly arrived settlers had died (Sanneh 1983a:56).

Another group of 1, 200 freed slaves this time from Nova Scotia in Canada arrived in 1792. Christian preachers in the American colonies and Nova Scotia led many of them to accept Christianity and they came back to Africa with a desire to make Christ known on their home continent (Groves 1948:206). The settlers sang hymns of worship as they came ashore and renamed the settlement Freetown. Churches were quickly established.

Although slavery was abolished in Britain other European nations still continued to raid Africa in search of “black gold”. British ships patrolled the waters of West Africa and forcefully released slaves from slave ships. Freetown became the place where these recaptured slaves were settled. Other towns like Abeokuta and Badagry followed. Most of the recaptured slaves embraced Christianity and they became the major missionary force in the area. Samuel Crowther became the most famous of them. In 1864 he became the first African Anglican bishop (Shaw 1996:143).

In spite of high hopes Christianity in Freetown was a disappointment to many. Groves quotes a certain John Clarkson who wrote: “What, we imagine might have become an effective Christian community, a beacon light shining among pagan and Muslim tribes, a saving salt ... [I]n the event, lent little lustre to the Christian name, little savour to African society” (1948:208). The many difficulties, too high expectations, suspicions concerning the motives of the Company who initiated the resettlement and demands for cooperation to ensure the settlement’s success were all contributing factors.

Sanneh offers another perspective. He highlights the extreme difficulties the early settlers had to endure. Many came to Africa as convinced Christians and in some cases their knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrine exceeded that of the missionaries sent to minister to them. He then continues to state their efforts must “by any standard ... be considered a notable achievement” (1983a: 68).

Mission societies generally did no better than the African settlers. Efforts by at least four mission societies failed to make any lasting impact for different reasons. Missionaries were at times the reason for failure. In one instance a CMS missionary Peter Hartwig found “... slave-catching more appealing than soul-seeking” (Sanneh 1983a:60). Health problems, disagreements and war all contributed to the failures.

2.4.4.2 Liberia

After the establishment of Freetown, American abolitionists with the hearty support of freed African slaves started preparations to create a similar Christian community in Africa. The American Colonization Society (ACS) was established and in 1820 an ACS-expedition went to Africa to find a viable place for their enterprise. After initial failure to find such a place the party were directed to Cape Mesurado that lies directly south of Sierra Leone (Shaw 1996:150). Cape Mesurado became Monrovia and the country became known as Liberia or Land of Freedom. On 26 July 1846 Liberia became an independent republic.

Some of the new settlers came with very clear Christian motives. They had the backing of mission societies like the one established in 1815 by the Black Baptists of Richmond. This society sent two missionaries Lott Carey and Collin Teague to Liberia. Lott Carey did excellent work before his untimely death in 1828. Five mission societies came to Liberia. The unhealthy climate and bad relationships between the Africans who had returned from America and the local population sadly hampered their work (Baur 2005:113-114).

In 1836 African American Baptists formed the Providence Missionary Baptist District Association with the sole purpose of doing missionary work in Africa. This initiative of Africans living outside Africa showed that mission work even in early years could not be portrayed as a Western endeavour alone. Real missionary progress in West Africa was only made in the late eighteenth hundreds.

2.4.4.3 Ghana

In Ghana German mission societies opened mission stations, translated Scripture and made use of African evangelists to spread the gospel. However it was the mission work done by the Methodists that had the biggest impact. Thomas Birch Freeman was instrumental in establishing a strong African Methodist Church through his labours of more than fifty years. He built strong relationships with the African kings and showed them great respect. Many churches and schools were built and a mature body of African Methodist clergymen was established (Shaw 1996:152-153). Later African theologians like Lamin Sanneh wrote appreciatively about his contribution to Christianity in West Africa.

Thomas Thompson was the Dean of the University of Cambridge. In 1744 he resigned in order to become a missionary. After a first stint in New Jersey in America Thompson requested to be placed in Africa. In 1751 his request was accepted. He landed in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) in 1752 as the first Anglican missionary in Africa sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG).

Some years later a Christian from the Fetu-tribe, Philip Quaque, was sent to England for studies. On his return to his home area he became the first non-European Anglican priest and missionary. With the formation of the Church Missionary Society in 1799 Anglican missionary work in Africa received even more impetus.

2.4.4.4 Cameroon, Senegal, Gabon and Zaire

Fernando Po is an island off the coast of Cameroon. It received many liberated slaves from British ships that intercepted slave ships and off-loaded them there. The Baptist Mission Society to the island and Cameroon sent Jamaican missionaries in 1843. Alfred Slaker with the help of two African colleagues, George Nkwe and Thomas Johnson, played a big role in establishing the church in Cameroon. He believed that the key to missionary success was the reliance on African Christians who had to be seen and treated as major partners in the mission enterprise (Shaw 1996:153).

In Senegal and Gabon the Holy Ghost Fathers made a permanent Catholic impact. Bishop Kobes was instrumental in the establishing of the first institute for African nuns in Africa.

The institute was called the Daughters of the Holy Heart of Mary (Falk 1979:112). It was also in Gabon that modern Catholicism's first permanent mission station in Africa was founded in 1844.

Earlier in the thesis I referred to Catholic mission work in Congo. Politics, greed and the slave trade brought the mission effort to an end. In 1878 Protestant missionaries took up the case of Christianity again. Thomas Comber and George Grenfell belonged to the Livingstone Inland Mission. They arrived in Sao Salvador and were welcomed by the king. Later Baptist missionaries followed. One of them translated the New Testament in Kikongo. The Protestant missionaries did not want to be too closely associated with the Catholic missionary work that preceded them. At the same time they had the advantage of the Congolese people being open to their message due to the (Roman Catholic) Christian seeds sown decades earlier (Shaw 1996:154).

2.4.4.5 Nigeria

In 1864 Samuel Crowther was placed in charge of the Niger mission by Henry Venn. He was the first African Anglican bishop. Venn's dream was that an African leadership would lead to an African Church in the area "... reared on its own indigenous roots, bearing fruit under the stimulus of its own environment and sustained by the proprietary labours of those it served" (Sanneh 1983a:170). The area that fell under him was very large and contained many diverse tribes. Evangelists working in the delta regions of Bonny and Brass proved to be successful. Relations with chiefs and kings were also friendly. Crowther for instance was personally invited by King William Pepple to open a school at Bonny (Baur 2005:123). A strong centre was established at Onitsha on the Niger River.

Unfortunately the positive work was clouded by accusations against several African missionaries and the attitude of the new generation of missionaries. Two pastors had apparently beaten a slave girl to death (Baur 2005:128). Other charges of abuse and wrong handling of funds led to tension with CMS. Crowther was stripped of most of his power and white missionaries took control of finances. They believed his appointment was a mistake and that "the reins of power should be kept firmly in efficient white hands for an indefinite period" (Hastings 1976:3).

The disrespect shown to the elderly bishop by young white missionaries aroused bitter feelings among his African church members. Sanneh writes: “A group of young missionaries, most of them young enough for Crowther to be their grandfather ... wanted Crowther and his African collaborators out of the way so that they could show the world how the Kingdom of God should be established in Africa” (1983a: 172)

Bitterness was increased by the fact that some CMS missionaries sided with European traders. The traders’ example and ruthless ways of promoting capitalism had a negative effect on Christianity in the region. When African missionaries the traders confronted them resented it.

African church leaders finally had had enough and convinced the aged bishop to condone their efforts at making the Church independent of CMS rule. One day before he could inaugurate the Anglican Delta Church as independent from CMS Bishop Crowther died. Crowther’s son was Archdeacon of Lower Niger (Delta) at the time, A few months later he severed all relationships with CMS and constituted the Niger Delta Pastorate. The Pastorate grew tremendously. In fifteen years the twelve congregations that formed the pastorate increase to fifty. Voluntary lay did most of the work. (Baur 2005:130).

With Crowther’s death James Johnson became the next champion of the cause for African leadership in the Anglican Church. He became the assistant bishop of the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa in 1900. The diocese covered the area presently known as Nigeria. Bishop Tugwell allowed him to work independently and without interference. Johnson became the first missionary to the Edo kingdom of Benin and the first one to preach in Arochukwu in Igboland. Arochukwu was the place where the “Long Juju” shrine was built. All feared the traditional holy place and Johnson’s action seen against this background was indeed courageous.

During his lifetime Johnson faced many struggles. He experienced the formation of at least fourteen independent churches in Nigeria alone. The churches mostly came into being due to disagreements and strife (Baur 2005:132). Johnson personally remained faithful to the Anglican Church but at the same time encouraged the development of an independent African Church with a local leadership.

Problems with European missionaries were not the only difficulties Johnson had to face. He had to deal with the bitter complaints of local Christians concerning the Sierra Leonian missionaries. They were apparently unwilling to train local pastors (Baur 2005:131). In answer the Bishop did what he could to open a theological college. Lack of funds thwarted his efforts. Johnson's struggles paid off only after his death when a West Africa Church Province was erected in 1951. The West Africa Native Bishopric Fund he had initiated was used to assist African bishops in West Africa.

European control of Christianity in Nigeria resulted in many complaints and bitterness on the side of the African leaders. Local initiative and leadership were constrained. The result of all the sad events was that "The dream of a kingdom community of love and unity had been battered by nineteenth-century realities but the dream remained alive" (Shaw 1996:157).

2.4.5 First Protestant missionary efforts in Southern Africa

Missionary efforts that originated from the southern tip of Africa had a permanent impact on Africa. It started in a small way, but increased dramatically later in the eighteenth century. Shaw writes that what "... began as a trickle in the early 1800's ... developed into a flood" (1996:166).

2.4.5.1 Moravian mission

The Pietist Count von Zinzendorf was the founder of the Moravian Mission Society. He and other leaders of the Society sent George Schmidt as their first missionary to South Africa. Schmidt arrived at the Cape on 9 July 1737. Commissioned to work with the Khoi, more commonly known as Hottentots, Schmidt settled at Genadendal about 100 miles to the east of Cape Town. Relationships between the Dutch settlers and the local inhabitants were not good and Schmidt experienced a lot of opposition from their side. From his side Schmidt criticized the lack of evangelistic enthusiasm in the Dutch Reformed Church. Matters came to a head when he baptized his first converts. The unpopular missionary was accused of baptizing people without the required ordination. Opposition became so severe that he left South Africa in 1744 with a broken heart (Groves 1948:171).

In 1792 a new attempt by the Moravian Mission Society was made to continue the work started by Schmidt. Three missionaries Marsveld, Schwinn and Kuhnel reopened the mission settlement at Genadendal. Shaw takes this event as "... a sign that the missionary century in South Africa had begun" (1996:166).

2.4.5.2 London Mission Society

The next mission society to take up work in Southern Africa was the London Mission Society (LMS). Dr Johannes Van Der Kemp spearheaded the work of the LMS. After his initial efforts to establish a work among the Xhosa failed, he settled in Graaff Reinet for a short time. There he focused his attention on the Khoi or Hottentots. Like George Schmidt he met with a lot of opposition from the Dutch settlers because he stood up for the rights of those he saw as the downtrodden. In spite of death threats van der Kemp continued to defend the rights of the Khoi gathering them in a settlement called Bethelsdorp. In later years another settlement was opened at the Kat River where agricultural projects were launched.

Van Der Kemp's emphasis on the "justice side" of the gospel made him hated by the colonists. However with his death he "... left behind a chaotic mission station but a clearer gospel" (Shaw 1996:167). The Scottish pastor John Philip that succeeded him continued to fight for justice. His involvement in politics in order to secure the rights of Africans won him many enemies and a few friends in South Africa.

LMS missionaries also set their eyes in the direction of the Orange River. A mission station at the Zak River that lies 400-500 miles northeast of Cape Town was opened in 1799 by Kicherer, Edwards and Kramer. (Groves 1948:225). In 1800 a second mission party joined the pioneers and eventually mission work led to the establishment of permanent Christian centres at Griquatown and Pella (Baur 2005:189).

With time LMS realized that their best opportunities were in the direction of Bechuanaland presently known as Botswana. The Tswana chief Mothibi invited missionaries to open a station at Lattakoo on the Kuruman River (Baur 2005:190). They saw it as an opportunity to establish a gateway to the interior of Africa. In 1820 the well known missionary Robert Moffat arrived at Kuruman. He gave about fifty years of his life in service of the people he

came to love so much. Moffat translated the Bible into Tswana and through his strong relationship with the local king established a pattern of Tswana kings being Christian (Shaw 1996:169). Moffat establish good contact with Mzilikazi. His son-in-law David Livingstone later took up this contact.

2.4.5.3 Other mission societies active in Southern Africa

After the Moravian Mission Society and LMS opened the way for missions in South Africa a flood of mission societies entered Africa from its southernmost part. Early in the nineteenth century Scottish Presbyterians from the Glasgow Missionary Society started to work among the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape. In 1841 William Govan opened the Lovedale College north of the Great Fish River. This centre became a famous training centre for pastors and teachers. In later years Dr James Stewart brought new quality to the training (Shaw 1996:173).

In 1840 the Quaker James Backhouse apparently visited every mission station that was opened by every mission society in South Africa (Groves 1948:267-268). He wrote reports on 85 active mission stations and centres. They belonged to the LMS (26), the Wesleyan Society (32), Moravian Mission Society (6), Glasgow Society (5), Paris Society (7), Rhenish Society (6) and the Berlin Mission (3).

2.4.5.4 Churches in South Africa and missions

In the Eastern Cape, William Shaw came as a Methodist chaplain to pastor the Methodist families that lived as settlers in the vicinity of Grahamstown. It did not take him long to become involved with the spiritual needs of the Xhosa people as well. Shaw dreamt of establishing a chain of mission stations that would span South Africa and that would reach even beyond its borders. He worked to make his vision a reality and in 1860 there were already "... dozens of mission stations, hundreds of Methodist missionaries, and some five thousand Methodist converts" (Shaw 1996:171-172).

Devoted Dutch Reformed pastors also played a major role in keeping mission work on the agenda of the Dutch Reformed Church. Reverend Van Lier was minister in Cape Town

from 1786-1793. He championed the cause of missionary work among the Hottentots. Van Lier also urged the church in Holland to organize a missionary society after the Moravian missionary George Schmidt had left Africa. His persistent efforts succeeded when Michiel Vos who was a member of the Church in the Cape was accepted as a missionary after the completion of his studies in Holland (Falk 1979:146-147).

In 1853 the Dutch Reformed Church in Transvaal appointed a mission committee with the specific purpose of evangelizing African tribes. Pioneer missionaries were sent from the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape. Alexander McKidd started work in the Zoutpansberg area while Henry Gonin served the Khatla-tribe on the border of the then Bechuanaland for forty-five years (Groves 1964:274-275). The famous Andrew Murray was a staunch supporter of missionary work. He started missionary training schools and in 1894 he was actively involved in the founding of the South Africa General Mission (Shaw 1996:174). The Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 devastated huge parts of the country, especially rural farmland. On the positive side many prisoners-of-war returned from places like St Helena with new mission zeal. It resulted in mission work done in South Africa as well as in present day Zimbabwe, Malawi and Nigeria (Falk 1979:181). Morgenster became the most well known of six mission stations in Zimbabwe.

2.4.5.5 Livingstone and Stanley

David Livingstone was Moffat's son-in-law. He is arguably the most famous missionary who ever worked in Africa. Arriving in Africa in 1840 Livingstone first went to Kuruman where he worked with Moffat. He did not stay long but went north and established a mission station at Mobatsa in 1843. Two more stations followed at Chonuane and Kolobeng.

It did not take Livingstone long to realize that he was not cut out for traditional missionary work. Instead he embarked on several expeditions thereby opening up the interior of Africa for others to follow. The Missionary Doctor as he was also known walked thousands of miles seeking for navigable waterways that could be used for trade. He focused a lot of his energy on exploring the Zambezi River and in searching for the source of the Nile. Livingstone's journeys through southern and central Africa made him world famous. It also

ignited a renewed interest in mission work. During a visit to England in 1857 his lectures inspired evangelicals at Cambridge to start several new mission agencies.

Livingstone's contact with slavery convinced him that evangelism in Africa would only succeed if slavery would stop (Shaw 1996:170). He also realized that his chosen way of work did not fit the mould of LMS and additionally he needed more funds. In 1857 he resigned from LMS.

2.4.5.5.1 LMS in the footsteps of Livingstone

LMS did not approve of everything Livingstone did. At the same time they were not unwilling to follow the trail he had opened up into Africa's interior. While exploring the Zambezi River as a possible way to open up the unknown interior for trade and mission work Livingstone made contact with the chief of the Makololo tribe. He established a good relationship with this man and promised him that a mission station would be opened in his area. LMS indeed sent two missionary couples with their children. Unfortunately all the children died within weeks. When the group leader also died the whole mission effort was given up (Baur 2005:201).

Livingstone followed up the contact his father-in-law had made with the warlike Matabele tribe. It eventually led to LMS mission work in the kingdom of Lobengula. William Sykes was the leader of LMS and he preached and taught for almost thirty years to an unresponsive people. After all these years he could not show one convert for all his effort (Baur 2005:202).

One of the reasons might have been that LMS did not believe in becoming involved in trade and politics. They felt so strongly about this that one of their missionaries Thomas Morgan Thomas was expelled when he transgressed this prohibition. Thomas returned to the area on his own where he continued to be involved in trade. After seven years he could show nine converts as proof that his method was more effective.

Together with three other mission organisations LMS went to the area north of the Zambezi River (present day Zambia). They desired to operate a boat service on Lake Tanganyika also known as Lake Victoria. Although a number of mission stations were opened, the only

permanent results were three stations on the southern shore among smaller ethnic groups (Baur 2005:205).

2.4.5.5.2 Parish Mission and Primitive Methodists

F.S. Arnot was a playmate of Livingstone when they were children. He started his missionary career in Barotseland but without too much success. After some time the Paris Mission arrived on the scene. Coillard and his team were more successful than Arnot. Chief Lewanika even made Coillard his personal counsellor. Baur writes that the mission's success could in part be attributed to the fact that "half of Coillard's missionary personnel were Sotho evangelists and teachers" (2005:205).

Coillard was involved in bringing the Primitive Methodists to Barotseland. They wanted to work among the warlike Ila-tribe, but were stopped to enter their intended place of work for three years (Falk 1979:202). The Primitive Methodist missionaries could never get rooted in the areas where they worked. One of the reasons for the mission's failure was that they struggled to adapt to the people they wanted to serve with the gospel.

2.4.5.5.3 UMCA, Scottish Presbyterian Missions and the Dutch Reformed Church

One result of Livingstone's visit to England was the founding of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). In 1861 Livingstone accompanied a pioneer party of six men who wanted to start mission work in the Shire Highlands of Malawi. Bishop Mackenzie was the leader of the group. MacKenzie became involved in the prevention of slave-raids by stronger tribes on their weaker neighbours. He did it against the advice of Livingstone. In the end it proved to hinder their mission efforts in a significant way. Bishop Mackenzie died of malaria in 1862 and his successor Bishop Tozer withdrew the whole team to Zanzibar (Baur 2005:206). Tozer started the first East African theological college on Zanzibar in 1869. The college was strategically an excellent investment. Evangelists, deacons and priests who were trained there became the main missionary force in later years (Shaw 1996:194).

A second attempt to reach Malawi was launched in 1882. Missionaries made their headquarters on Likoma Island and from there built schools along Lake Malawi's shore. A

boat that housed a chapel, catechist school and even a printing press visited the schools. Evangelist-teachers who manned the schools had to face the very real danger of attacks by hostile tribes like the Yao. Like in so many instances these unknown African men were the real heroes of pioneer missionary work (Baur 2005:207).

After Livingstone's death the Scottish Presbyterian Mission decided to start a work in Malawi in remembrance of their famous compatriot. James Steward was the mission's leader. He and his team opened a station at Cape Maclair at the southern tip of Lake Malawi. Relationships with neighbouring chiefs became strained and the missionaries moved north while leaving the Maclair station in the care of a catechist.

William Koyi's story again emphasizes the important role of Africans in missionary efforts. He came with Steward from South Africa and made positive contact with the chief of the Ngoni-tribe. His bravery of encountering Ngoni warriors on their way to war impressed the Ngoni king so much that he allowed the evangelist to stay with him. Eventually a mission station was opened and the Ngoni-tribe at large adopted Christianity (Baur 2005:208).

Dr Robert Laws served the mission for fifty two years. He established good relationships with local chiefs and succeeded to avert a war between the Ngoni and Tonga tribes (Falk 1979:210). After receiving a large amount of money from a certain Lord Overtoun he opened the Overtoun Institution. With the establishment of this educational institute the mission headquarters moved to Khondowe in 1895. Khondowe later became known as Livingstonia. Graduates from the institute spread all over Malawi and also went to Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Church of Scotland had a vision of starting a Christian colony in Malawi. They called the chosen place Blantyre in honour of Livingstone who was born in the town of Blantyre in Scotland. Duff MacDonald became the director in 1878. He mastered the Yao language and translated the Gospels of Matthew and Mark as well as some portions of the Old Testament in Yao (Falk 1979:211).

At first the work did not go smoothly because of slave related issues. When David Scott took over the leadership matters improved very much. Scott insisted that his Scottish and African helpers were to be seen as equals. He also restored relationships with the chiefs in

the area by recompensing them for their slaves who ran away and then came to the Christian settlements. Scott's successor Alexander Heatherwick became known as a defender of the rights of Africans. The Malawians honoured him by electing him to the Legislative Council (Baur 2005:210).

In spite of the many negative things that were said about the Dutch Reformed Church it also took part in evangelizing Africa. In 1888 they started mission work in Malawi where the focus was on agriculture and village industries. A hospital was opened at Nkhoma and at present it is still being seen as one of the best in the country.

2.4.5.5.4 Roman Catholic mission work in Livingstone's footsteps

Jesuits with the encouragement of Bishop Richards tried to start a work among the Matabele of King Lobengula. They were welcomed and their practical work like the reparation of ox-wagons was appreciated. However no interest was shown toward their gospel proclamation. One of the reasons was that the Matabeles disapproved of Catholic celibacy (Falk 1979:192). Later on a new effort was made with work among the Karanga-tribe in Empandeni. It proved to be more successful and in later years Empandeni became a predominantly Catholic area (Baur 2005:203).

The Jesuit mission work in Mozambique was more successful than what had been the case in Malawi. In 1910 disaster struck when the government expelled all Catholic missionaries. It was only in 1940 that they could start a renewed evangelization effort.

In Malawi and Northern Zambia the so-called White Fathers cooperated too closely with the Portuguese officials. When the British flag replaced the Portuguese one in Malawi in 1890 they lost most of their opportunities for ministry. Islam also won more and more converts among the Yao. Cardinal Lavigeri then told the missionaries working in the area to move to Tanganyika (Baur 2005:211). It was only in later years that Catholic efforts were renewed by both the White Fathers and the Montfort Fathers.

Bishop Joseph Dupont did notable work among the Bemba, a warlike people living in northern Zambia. His courage earned him the respect of everybody. When the powerful chief Mwamba died the chief's councillors appointed the French bishop as their new leader.

This arrangement was unacceptable to the British authorities and the nephews of the deceased chief. Bishop Dupont advised the Bemba to accept British rule. He also encouraged them to agree on the appointment of Mwamba's nephew Kalongjofu as chief.

The Bemba councillors accepted his wise advice but still regarded Dupont as their senior chief. The respect and acceptance he enjoyed made it possible for Dupont to open missions and schools wherever he wanted to. Thousands came to listen to the gospel message but only a few hundred went through the four-year catechumenate. When Dupont eventually left the area in 1911 there were 5,000 Bemba converts and ten times as many catechumens in eight mission stations (Baur 2005:213).

2.4.5.5 Stanley and the colonial scramble for Africa

When Stanley became Livingstone's successor in opening up the interior of Africa it led to the race of Europe in acquiring colonies. On another level mission societies competed in a race of establishing their work in the new colony of Congo. After Stanley had made known his discoveries King Leopold II of Belgium claimed the Lower Congo as his personal colony. Protestant and Catholic missionaries received his permission to work there and started a "race" to establish their work ahead of other "opponents".

The Livingstone Inland Mission was established and the British Baptist Missionary Society opened a base in Sao Salvador. From the Roman Catholic side the Holy Ghost Fathers spearheaded the work. They reached Mfwa, which later became Brazzaville first. Then logistical problems thwarted their initial success (Baur 2005:216). Father Augouard met with many frustrations but in 1884 succeeded in establishing the Catholic Mission in the so-called French Congo.

Stanley received permission to build what is presently known as Leopoldville from Chief Ngaliema. He invited Protestant and Catholic missionaries to work there. The Livingstone Mission took up his invitation, as did the Baptists. Not long after this the Swedish Mission opened a station in Lower Congo as well.

Politically King Leopold II, Germany, France and Portugal claimed parts of Congo as their colonial property. The disagreements led to the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885. During the

conference King Leopold became the ruler of the Congo Independent State. Suddenly Protestant missionary societies found themselves "... under the jurisdiction of a Roman Catholic state" (Falk 1979:376). "Fortunately" for them Leopold viewed the missionary enterprise from an economic and nationalistic angle. Since the Protestant missions had the most money available and would win Leopold the favour of countries like Britain he allocated free land to them. At a later stage he would do his best to stop Protestant missionary expansion in the area under his rule.

From a nationalistic point King Leopold II persuaded the Belgium Fathers of Scheut to start a work at the expense of the pro-French Holy Ghost Fathers and the more international White Fathers. He also invited other Belgian Catholic missions promising them good land for free. Several missions like the Jesuits, Trappists and Sacred Heart Priests accepted (Baur 2005:219). Catholic leaders in Rome saw through the motives of Leopold. They then made their own arrangements of allocating regions to different orders.

After some time Leopold went back on his initial promises of free land in an effort to stop Protestant expansion. As could be expected it resulted in an outcry. At the same time reports of atrocities against the local population brought additional pressure on the Belgian king. He tried to regain the support of the Catholic mission societies but it was all too late. As general criticism increased Leopold lost his power and the Belgian Parliament took over the Congo Independent State in 1908. From then on it became a Belgian colony (Baur 2005:220).

Many mission societies started to work in the Congo once it became a Belgian colony. By the time of independence 22 mission societies and about 100 other religious bodies had been active in the area. Most of these societies and religious bodies were Catholic. When Congo became Zaire after independence it had the largest Catholic Church in Africa (Baur 2005:221).

2.4.6 Mission work on Africa's east coast

2.4.6.1 Ethiopia

CMS missionaries entered a divided and weakened Ethiopia in 1830. Samuel Gobat and Christian Kugler were the pioneers but in a short time others followed. Ludwig Krapf came

with the second group of missionaries and his focus was the Galla people in the south of the country (Falk 1979:233). Frustrated by the way local leaders changed their decisions and acted unjustly he criticized them. He also involved himself in politics trying to get Britain to intervene in the fragmentation of the country through factionalism. Unfortunately “meddling in politics” made Krapf unpopular. He was forced out of the country in 1842. A year later other CMS missionaries were expelled apparently because they had refused to venerate Mary (Shaw 1996:183-184).

The Catholic missionary Justin de Jacobis had more success. His ascetic lifestyle and way of sending his disciples out in pairs of two resulted in many conversions. In 1841 a new spiritual leader or *abun* of the Ethiopian Coptic Church was elected. His name was Salama and he had a distinct bias against Catholics. When the governor of Qwara succeeded in conquering several independent Ethiopian kingdoms and unifying them into one Salama crowned him as king. He accepted the name of Tewodros (Shaw 1996:185). Salama then started to persecute the Catholics until he fell out of the king's favour. In the end King Tewodros imprisoned him.

In spite of his earlier success King Tewodros became increasingly unstable. In 1867 he imprisoned a group of English missionaries. A military expedition was sent to free them and they defeated the king's forces. Tewodros then committed suicide (Groves 1964:290-291). His successor died while defending the country against the *Mahdi* that had taken power in neighbouring Sudan. The *Mahdi* tried to expand their rule into Ethiopian territory.

Although the *Mahdi* was stopped from taking control of Ethiopia another enemy appeared on the horizon. Italy desired to take control of Ethiopia. It succeeded in capturing the area of present day Eritrea but then the new Ethiopian king soundly defeated the invaders (Groves 1964:42). Both the Ethiopian kingdom and the traditional Coptic faith ended the century on a victorious note.

2.4.6.2 Kenya

After his expulsion from Ethiopia, Ludwig Krapf went to Zanzibar where he obtained permission from Sultan Sayyid Said of Oman to build a mission station. He was allowed to work among the non-Muslim tribes on Kenya's coast. Tragedy struck when his wife and

newborn baby died of malaria (Falk 1979:234). This however did not stop him from going forward. In fact he wrote to the CMS office in London that the grave of his wife was "... a sign that you have commenced the struggle... As the victory of the Church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members, you may be more convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its eastern shore" (quoted by Shaw 1996:182).

When missionary reinforcements came between 1846 and 1849 in the form of Johann Rebmann and J Erhardt the new team moved a few miles inland from Mombasa. The first work among the Giriama tribe was not very successful. After twenty years of work by CMS missionaries there were still only about twelve converts (Shaw 1996:187-188).

Krapf did not allow the disappointing start to destroy his vision. He made new plans of establishing a string of mission stations starting at the unsuccessful station on Kenya's east coast all the way across Africa to the continent's western shore. Together with his colleague Rebmann Krapf went on several journeys. His main goal was to explore how his vision could be turned into reality. Chief Kivoi of the Kamba tribe was responsive to the missionaries' message and Krapf saw his area as the second link in the "mission station chain". Unfortunately bandits while exploring with Krapf killed Chief Kivoi. The missionary did not shoot at the attackers because he felt it was against his conscience. Although the Kamba people could not understand his reaction they forgave him fully (Baur 2005:225). The tragic incident however closed the door on further missionary work for a whole generation.

Krapf's vision never materialized in his lifetime. Several missionaries died or became very ill in trying to establish more mission stations in Kenya's interior. Krapf himself had to return home due to ill health. Instead of despairing he wrote an inspiring book on missions that motivated many missionaries following after him. The Swahili Bible translations, grammars and dictionaries also became very helpful to those in subsequent mission efforts.

Only Rebmann stayed for about twenty years at the first mission station CMS had established. He reduced three languages into writing and developed dictionaries for all three (Falk 1979:236). When he left nearly blind in 1874 there was only a handful of

converts. This mustard seed beginning expanded tremendously in the next fourteen years. By 1888 there were two thousand Christians in the very place that at first yielded such a disappointing crop.

One of the reasons for the new growth was that a new type of Protestant Christianity had developed in the colonies of freed slaves. The colonies were modelled on the Catholic work done in Bagamoyo. Freretown was the first such colony to be established after reports by Sir Bartle Frere to CMS were accepted and implemented. *Kitoro* or refugee Christianity was a bold faith expression that attracted many. It was also costly and the fact that David Koi who came from this group became Kenya's first martyr is proof of it (Shaw 1996:190).

Relationships between CMS missionaries and the African kitoro Christians were at times tense because the Africans felt their European brothers did not treat them as equals. African evangelists also received very low salaries while missionaries were well paid in comparison. Such double standards inevitably affected relationships.

Several other mission agencies entered Kenya in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Peter Cameron Scott started the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) with its first station at Ukambani. He died after only one year, but the mission he had established became one of the biggest in East Africa. When a railway was built between Mombassa and Uganda access to Kenya's interior became much easier with a resultant increase in mission activity.

2.4.6.3 Tanzania

Bagamoyo is one of the most famous places in the mission history of East Africa. The Holy Ghost Fathers established a Christian village in 1868 on eighty acres of land where slaves awaiting transport to Zanzibar were gathered. The inhabitants were mostly freed slaves. A philosophy of "work and pray" shaped life and through strict discipline and a shared economy the settlement became self-supporting. Married couples received their own plot to farm on. The discipline that helped to make the settlement a success eventually caused its undoing. Residents felt trapped by the strict laws, forced religious

attendance and lack of freedom. Many left and Bagamoyo eventually became little more than a pleasant memory (Shaw 1996:195-196).

Zanzibar and slavery were synonymous in the nineteenth century. However when Sir Bartle Frere went to the sultan of Zanzibar in 1872 to negotiate on the prohibition of slavery the situation changed for the good. A hurricane had destroyed the sultan's clove plantations and many of his ships so he was eager to cooperate. In 1873 an antislavery treaty was signed (Shaw 1996:189).

The Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) had moved to Zanzibar in 1864 where they had started a theological institute, namely St Andrews College. When the sultan outlawed slavery they erected a cathedral on the place where slaves were previously sold. UMCA also launched their mission to the Tanzanian mainland from Zanzibar. They started a work in 1875 at Magila. In the early stages of missionary work in Tanzania, UMCA had the largest Protestant missionary staff. They also had the most Protestant converts (Falk 1979:239).

Many of the Christian settlers at Magila were freed slaves from Malawi. Moving back to their homeland in 1876 they travelled through the kingdom of Chief Matola of the Yao tribe. On their request he allowed them to settle in his area. The settlers' Christian witness impacted the Yao of the area and many accepted Christianity (Shaw 1996:194). Where European missionaries had failed these African Christians succeeded.

2.4.6.4 Uganda

Before the arrival of Stanley on the Africa scene Uganda was known as Buganda. The ruler of Buganda was called the *kabaka*. In many ways he was seen more as a god than a man. When a *kabaka* died he became one of the *balubaale* or hero gods. Kabaka Mutesa became interested in Islam and at some point it seemed that his whole country embraced it. However when Stanley met with the Mutesa he convinced the ruler that Christianity was superior to Islam. The *kabaka* called his chiefs together and challenged them to choose between the two monotheistic religions. Knowing the preference of their ruler the chiefs chose Christianity (Baur 2005:234).

Not long after the decision was made a group of chiefs dared to challenge the *kabaka* trying to bring him back to Islam. Seventy of them paid with their lives for their imprudence and thousands of Muslims in the kingdom were killed (Shaw 1996:198).

Stanley appealed for missionaries to be sent to Buganda and CMS responded. Two pioneer missionaries were warmly welcomed by the *kabaka* in 1877. Unfortunately an Arab trader killed one of them called Shergold Smith after only a short time. C T Wilson requested for another missionary to come and help him. He found a worthy colleague in Alexander Mackay. Mackay was a direct type of person and he immediately took some of his priority issues to the *kabaka*. He denounced Islam as a false religion and slavery as an evil unworthy of kings. When no harm came to him after he had thrown a powerful magical charm in the fire people started to take his message more seriously. MacKay desired to transform all realms of Buganda life through Christianity (Shaw 1996:199).

From the Catholic side the White Fathers also entered Buganda and explained their version of Christianity to the *kabaka* and his court members. Their champions were Livinhac and Lourdel. Apart from giving the gospel to the ruler they also supplied him with guns. The *kabaka* enjoyed listening to the two rival groups as they debated their causes before him. Groves comment that the *kabaka* was “interested in his European guests rather as representatives of England and France than as teachers of Reformed and traditional Christianity” (1964:89).

Eventually the *kabaka* asked to be baptized by both the Protestants and the Catholics. Both groups found his polygamy too big an obstacle and refused. The refusal was a turning point in the African ruler’s relationship with all the missionaries. He withdrew both from the missionaries and their message. According to Baur he declared Islam as the state religion in June 1880 (2005:235). One cannot help but wonder how events would have turned out if some missionaries had baptized Mutesa.

Although the king distanced himself from Christianity members from his court were still interested. Whereas the Protestants found favour with the people connected with the ministry of the treasury the Catholic version of Christianity attracted the court pages.

Christianity's fortunes changed when a certain young man Mwanga became the new *kabaka*. He had a negative attitude towards Christianity and the actions of the newly appointed Bishop Hannington led to a direct violent confrontation. Hannington ignored advice and unwisely approached the *kabaka*'s kingdom from the east instead of the south. The *kabaka* saw it as a threat to his rule and he took action. Hannington was captured and killed (Groves 1964:91).

Mwanga practiced homosexuality without restraint. The missionaries openly disapproved. It placed an even greater strain on relationships. When one of his favourite sages who was a Christian refused to take part in his homosexual activities Mwanga retaliated by burning at least thirty-one Christians at the site of religious sacrifice (Shaw 1996:201). The massacre took place in June 1886. Mwanga's court sages met their death in such a brave way that many new converts requested baptism from both Catholic and Protestant missionaries even while persecution was still continuing. Groves honoured them by writing: "These African witnesses to their faith were no whit behind the Christian martyrs of any age in any land" (1964:93).

As could be expected there was a political reaction. Several wars followed one another. After the *kabaka* had been defeated Muslims seized power and declare Buganda a Muslim state. Shortly thereafter Captain Lugard took control by force and in 1894 Uganda became a British protectorate.

Christianity continued to spread. The work of George Pilkington from 1890-1897 made a particularly huge impact on Ugandan Christianity. He was loved and respected by African Christians who in turn went out with the gospel to neighbouring countries like Sudan and Congo. Pilkington organised a group of Africans and Europeans and tasked them to translate the Bible into Luganda. Armed with the translated Bible, evangelists went at first to the kingdoms of Toro, Bunyoro and Ankole that lay west of Uganda. The evangelists were joined by Apolo Kivebulaya, who later became famous as the Apostle to the Pygmies (Baur 2005:241).

Kivebulaya was instrumental in the evangelizing of several tribes in Congo. The Christianization of Uganda and surrounding areas were in a large part achieved because of the labours of African evangelists and missionaries.

2.4.6.5 Rwanda and Burundi

Catholic and Protestant missionaries desired to win the people east of Buganda over to Christ. The Catholic Bishop Hirth received permission from the king in present day Rwanda to preach to the Bahutu. At the same time he was prohibited of reach out to the Batutsi. Five mission stations were established in so many years. Tension grew between the missionaries who in some instances assumed the role of chiefs and the Batutsi. Fortunately Bishop Hirth and Father Classe could regain the confidence of the king and his councillors. Missionaries and Bahutu Christians were therefore tolerated although the Batutsi rejected "... the religion of the uncouth *wazungu* who understood nothing of the elaborate court rituals. Thus Christianity became a Hutu Church within a Tutsi-dominated society" (Baur 2005:248-249).

Bishop Hirth believed in creating an African clergy as soon as possible. He opened a minor and major seminary and ordained five priests within eight months. At Murunda he established the first all-African parish, which proved to be very successful.

After the First World War the Batutsi leaders requested schools. Although they did not want religious education to be taught in these schools it opened the doors for the future turn of the Batutsi to Christianity. Work in Burundi also continued but at a much slower pace.

2.4.7 Evaluation of missionary work during the Third Wave

Christianity had at last gained a foothold in Africa that it had failed to do during the two preceding waves. Thousands of Africans accepted Christ in the various forms He was portrayed by Protestant and Catholic missionaries. More important African evangelists took the gospel message further through their own initiative. Many were willing to die for their faith and several indeed paid the highest price for remaining loyal to their King. Often the martyrdom of African Christians drew more Africans to Christianity as was the case in Uganda in 1886 Groves writes: "Their blood was once more the seed of the Church" (1964:93).

Missionary work done by dedicated men and women must also be acknowledged. Hundreds came to serve in difficult circumstances and many literally gave their lives in order to further God's kingdom in Africa. Having been children of their time they have indeed made many mistakes but few would cast doubt on the devotion of people like Moffat, Law, Rebmann and Pilkington. Through their pioneer work they made Christianity an acceptable and in many cases a desirable religion in places where hope up till then was a rarity.

The fact that Christians in Europe and missionaries led the battle against slavery is commendable. Livingstone constantly urged the people of Britain to take strong action against this "open wound" that hindered the spread of the gospel in Africa (Shaw 1996:170). Through their labours thousands of Africans were saved from a miserable future. Freed slaves also contributed to the spread of Christianity in both West and East Africa.

On the negative side imperialism and the missionary enterprise were too closely connected. This often resulted in African suspicion since Africans understandably found it difficult to distinguish between purely missionary motives and the forces that drove colonial authorities. Baur writes: "... the impact of European imperialism and civilization on Africa society was too strong for an independently-ruled African church with an indigenous culture to emerge at that time" (2005:134).

Missionaries as a rule wanted to have too much control over their converts. The fact that "... the catechist watched over the discipline of the flock but the missionary set the rules and made judgements" (Baur 2005:260) brought a lot of unnecessary tension in relationships. At times missionaries were accused of paternalism and that they did not treat their African Christian brothers as equals (Shaw 1996:191). It is sad to acknowledge that these complaints were often valid.

Tensions of many kinds also resulted in the emergence of so-called Ethiopianism. African Christians often found the Western mould on Christianity too restrictive. At times they resented the unwillingness of missionaries to release control to upcoming African church leaders. In Nigeria for instance the Bethel African Church was established as a direct result of frustration with the behaviour of missionaries (see Baur 2005:130).

The negative attitude of missionaries against all traditional African religions and rites brought a reaction from some African leaders. They rejected the idea that all African values and traditions were bad and un-Christian.

Rivalries between missionary societies especially between Catholics and Protestants marred a lot of the good work both groups did. The battle for the heart of the Buganda *kabaka* is a tragic example (see Falk 1979:243).

Lastly missionaries too often failed in training African pastors who could take charge of the Church. Although “lower-level” church leaders were trained to help the missionaries it was often too limited. In most cases the training also lacked an emphasis on bringing up a trained indigenous clergy who could eventually replace the missionaries.

2.5 Christianity in Africa in the 20th century

2.5.1 Colonialism and church growth

It is an interesting fact that tremendous church growth took place in Africa during the time of colonialism. While there were only about four million Christians in 1900 their numbers increased to an estimated seven million in 1914. The Christian population more than doubled between 1914 and 1930 and in 1950 there were an estimated 34 million Christians on the continent (Shaw 1996:207).

Several reasons can be given for this growth phenomenon. Colonialism changed Africa from “... a continent of hundreds of independent kingdoms, tribes, small republics, coastal colonies” (Hastings 1976:4) to a continent belonging to a limited number of Western countries. Although colonialism had many dark sides it cannot be denied that in other ways it made life easier and safer.

Shaw believes that Africans became receptive to the gospel when they perceived the colonial powers in their area as effective in administration and beneficial in their control (1996:211). Islam’s grip was normally weakened wherever European colonial powers

annexed a country. Inter-tribal wars and persecution of converts were restrained and repulsive traditions like human sacrifice outlawed (Groves 1964:46). All of this contributed to church growth.

The power of colonizing countries also impressed many Africans. When a strong tribe in a specific area was defeated in battle it had a significant effect on the increase of converts. The Ashanti War in Ghana is a good example. While there were few converts before the war the Basel Mission recorded about 25,000 converts and the Wesleyan Methodist Mission 26,000 in less than two decades (Shaw 1996:212). Africans responded favourably to the missionaries' message if they experienced them as capable of playing a mediating role between clashing tribes.

Missionaries were often instrumental in convincing the politicians in their respective countries to enter specific parts of Africa. They felt that their governments could bring new stability and security to Africa. Colonial authorities also meant better infrastructure with the resulting improvement of missionary logistics. Beetham writes: "... European rule began to provide an umbrella of law and order for missionary activity. A settled government, the telegraph, the railway – all helped" (1967:16).

Colonialism brought increased opportunities for missionary work. On the other hand it had a negative impact. Colonial authorities had the final word on where missionaries could work and where not. Missionaries were seen as "members of the ruling race" (Groves 1964:51) and in many cases the very persons who brought the white rulers to take the place of African chiefs.

King Lobengula resisted missionaries because he understood that political forces would follow them. He used a real African illustration to drive his point home when discussing the matter with a LMS missionary: "Did you ever see a chameleon catching a fly? The chameleon gets behind the fly and remains motionless for some time, then he advances very closely and gently, first putting one leg forward and then another. At last, when well within reach, he darts out his tongue and the fly disappears. England is the chameleon and I am that fly" (quoted by Groves 1964:52). His fears and suspicions were shared and confirmed by many African chiefs after their lands were taken by colonial powers.

Missionaries at times stood between two fires. On the one side they were grateful for the presence of colonial rulers who made life in general much easier. On the other side they often resented their arrogant behaviour, selfish lifestyles and exploitation of Africans. When confronting them on behalf of their converts they would experience hostility (Shaw 1996:214). At the same time African Christians would accuse them of working against them while siding with the white rulers. The seemingly and often real cooperation between missionaries and political authorities increasingly resulted in tension between them and African Christians.

2.5.2 A new type of missionary

Another reason for church growth in Africa was the dramatic increase in missionaries. In 1886 the power of students was re-emphasized with the launching of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) in 1886. H Culbertson quoted the Princeton Pledge which read: "I purpose, God willing, to become a foreign missionary" (<http://home.snu.edu> 21: June 2006). Indeed thousands of young missionaries flooded Africa with the desire of advancing God's kingdom. American missionaries working abroad increased from nine hundred in 1890 to five thousand in one decade only. In 1914 the mission force rose to ten thousand members. Many of these young men and women came to Africa (Shaw 1996:215-216).

The new mission force differed from earlier missionaries in that they desired to reach the whole world with the gospel in their generation. There was only time for evangelizing the lost. No time was to be wasted on secondary missionary issues. Obviously this urgency lead to little formal training of prospective missionaries. This approach also resulted in a neglect of transforming societies with Christian principles. (Shaw 1996:216).

The new missionaries were mostly inexperienced, young men and women. Yet they saw themselves as God's chosen instruments who had to lead this victory of light over darkness. They were often arrogant in their view of themselves trying to keep control when it would have been more effective to hand leadership over to local Christian leaders.

All however was not negative. The young missionaries poured astonishing energy and effort into the whole mission enterprise in Africa. They established mission stations, translated Scriptures in vernacular languages and trained native evangelists to assist them in widespread evangelism (Shaw 1996:217).

2.5.3 A new kind of African Christian

African Christians undeniably played the major role in church growth on the continent. Many new converts would take the good news of how the gospel transformed their lives to their relatives and communities. Falk points out that “In much the same way as the church was born in Antioch ... the church has been born through the testimony of the believers in many towns, villages and hamlets of Africa” (1979:430). Baur goes so far as to say “... about 90% of all conversions may be the fruit of their instructions” (2005:404).

As these young Christians matured in their faith they also developed an independence of mind. The availability of the Bible in vernacular languages played a major role. Shaw observes: “That the King of kings would choose one’s own vernacular to speak his very word gave a new dignity and power to vernacular culture that transcended the insults of imperialism” (1996:218).

Many African church leaders found it too restrictive and unnecessary to live out their faith within the Western Christian mould. Some leaders remained within the traditional missionary churches but made it clear that the time was ripe for them to lead their denominations. They became increasingly adamant that administrative control had to be handed over to them.

Others “... adopted the twin paths of administrative independence and ritual adaptation” (Sanneh 1983:180). Leaders who chose to become radically African in the expression of the faith formed charismatic churches and prophet movements. The Liberian William Wadé Harris was one of the early prophetic leaders. He had walked on Africa’s west coast from Liberia to the Gold Coast and back preaching a simple message. Tens of thousands of people listened to him. Hastings describes his preaching journey as “... the most extraordinarily successful one man evangelical crusade that Africa has ever known” (1976:10).

Eventually the African Initiated Church Movement resulted in the establishment of thousands of African Independent Churches. Leaders of such churches preferred to be called African Indigenous Churches. African Indigenous Churches (AIC's) placed emphasis on healing, prayer, holiness and spiritual gifts. They moved away from rigid institutional structures and cumbersome administration and instead focused on inner renewal and personal wellbeing.

Church growth exploded through the AIC's. In 1900 there were only about 100,000 members. By the end of the twentieth century there were at least 10,000 AIC's with an estimated 55 million church members. These churches can be found in most countries of Africa with Southern Africa having the largest concentration (Barrett 2000:43).

2.5.4 Missionary work and the growing confidence amongst African Christians

The First World War had a lasting effect on missionary work in Africa. European missionaries often found themselves restricted in their work. British colonial administrators would not trust German and Italian missionaries in their colonies. For example, German missionaries in Cameroon, Togo, Namibia and Tanzania were placed in internment camps while their work was given to missionaries belonging to Allied nations.

Popular opinion in Europe also changed dramatically. Before the First World War it was presumed that the West as the bastion of civilization had superior benefits to give to inferior African tribes. The presumption was shattered by the terrible loss of lives European nations inflicted on each other. Since the Church was closely connected to the moral values of the West her value also dropped in the esteem of many. Logically it had a negative effect on missions (Shaw 1996:221-222).

From their side many missionaries doubted the wisdom of close cooperation with colonial authorities. Relationships were often strained when German workers returned to resume their ministry in countries that were colonies of Germany's enemies during the war.

The focus of many missionary organisations shifted away from direct evangelism to more social issues like education, medical work and a search for social justice. Colonial powers

saw the potential of the large network of already established mission schools. They planned to use these schools in enhancing their new goal of empowering Africans to governing themselves. In spite of misgivings concerning cooperation with government authorities many missionaries thought it a worthy goal. They consequently put their energy behind the effort. Shaw remarks: "The building of the school rather than the building of the church became first priority" (1996:224).

While Europe's Christians struggled with a growing identity crisis Christians in the developing world grew in confidence. Due to the absence of missionaries during the years of the First World War African leaders had to shoulder the responsibility of leading the Church. They did it in a commendable way. Unfortunately many missionaries ignored this fact or did not see the abilities of the African leaders when they eventually returned. Instead of sharing responsibilities they again took over leadership (Baur 2005:404-405).

Thousands of young Africans received an education that ripened their desire to progress in the modern type of lifestyle they had adopted. Tension between controlling missionaries and independent minded African Christians increased.

The Second World War magnified the disillusionment of many Westerners. While they tried to make sense of so much destruction in such a short time Africans grew in confidence. Emperor Haile Selassie's success in defeating their colonial ruler Italy stimulated a desire for independence all over the continent. While colonial powers tried to tighten their grip on their colonies with its rich natural resources African leaders became more militant in their quest for freedom. When the Gold Coast became independent under the new name of Ghana in 1957 it was only a matter of time for the colonial wall to collapse under the powerful flood of African nationalism.

2.5.5 Councils and Conferences

2.5.5.1 IMC and WCC meetings

In 1910 the first International Missionary Council (IMC) was held at Edinburgh. Most of the delegates came from the Western World. However church growth in the so-called mission fields resulted in maturing indigenous churches and more representatives from

these parts of the world attended the missionary conferences that followed Edinburgh. In Jerusalem (1928) and Tambaran (1938) IMC delegates "... began to recognize the younger churches as equals" (Bosch 1999:379). Such acknowledgements stimulated African Christian leaders to seek more administrative control of their churches at home.

Apart from the international mission conferences there was a growing desire for a united worldwide Christian body. On 23 August 1948 it led to the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC). One hundred-and-forty-seven churches coming from 44 countries were present at the inauguration in Amsterdam. The first general secretary, Visser 't Hooft said at the opening function that the WCC is "... a fellowship which seeks to express that unity in Christ already given to us and to prepare the way for a much fuller and much deeper expression of that unity" (<http://www.wcc-coe.org>: 21 June 2006). The general secretary clearly wanted to assure emerging national churches of their equal value to the churches that brought the gospel to them.

In line with the growing voice of leaders from developing countries the WCC stated that one of its main purposes was that churches should accept solidarity with each other. Members of the WCC had to be willing to help one another when need be. Churches should also "refrain from such actions as are incompatible with brotherly relationships" (<http://www.wcc-coe.org>: 21 June 2006).

Phrases like the above implied that all churches had equal status as brothers rather than standing in a mother-daughter relationship. African leaders caught up in the spirit of independence indeed had waited long for such equal treatment. In the same year of the WCC's forming South African political leaders accepted apartheid as the country's official policy. They did it with the backing of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). The WCC directed strong criticism against both politicians and the DRC.

International Missionary Conferences continued to gather parallel to those of the WCC. Many felt it was an unacceptable arrangement. When the IMC met in 1958 in Ghana the issue was addressed. A decision was made to integrate the IMC in the WCC. Not everybody was convinced it was the right thing to do. However, in the end those in favour of such a move prevailed.

James Scherer quotes the view of Erik W. Nielsen on mission in the aftermath of the Ghana Assembly "... Mission is not just a special type of activity which can be identified and circumscribed within a mission board or a special Division of Mission, but is something which has to do with the very existence of the Church ... In every aspect of this existence there must be the missionary dimension and call" (1987:101). This conviction that mission and Church could not be separated, gave impetus to the decision to merge the IMC and WCC

At the Ghana IMC meeting the perspective on mission also underwent major changes. The young churches established in the so-called mission were "growing up" and gained a stronger voice and presence. The church at large also came to understand and accept that mission belonged to its essence. Unanimous agreement was reached that the whole Church was called to be involved in God's mission.

Traditional perspectives dividing the Church in sending and receiving parts as well as younger and older churches had to be replaced by a view of the Church as one Body with one God-given mission task. Bosch described the decision as follows: "The church-*for*-others was slowly turning into the church-*with*-others; pre-existence was changing into coexistence" (1999:379).

Practically it meant that Western missionaries had to cooperate with the churches they viewed as the fruit of their mission. They could not dictate to them how to live out their faith, but had to listen to them as fellow workers in God's fields and equal yoke-fellows on what they saw as the real needs in their areas. This necessitated a mind shift that was traumatic to many coming from the "old way of looking at mission".

The members of the Ghana Assembly also wanted the Church in mission to retain its character of crossing frontiers. However they did not want these frontiers to be seen as geographical frontiers anymore, but rather as the frontiers between Christianity and other faiths existing within the same geographical borders.

In preparation for the expected merge of the IMC with the Newbigin explained the difference between the Church's mission intention and dimension "Because the Church *is* the mission there is a missionary dimension of everything that the Church does. But not

everything that the Church does has a missionary intention. And unless there is in the life of the Church a point of concentration for the missionary intention, the missionary dimension which is proper to the whole life of the Church will be lost" (quoted by Scherer 1987:104).

On 19 November 1961 the IMC finally became part of the WCC. The Constitution of the WCC was expanded to allow the forming of a Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). This Commission had to keep the Church aware of its mission task in all its forms and to stimulate her to active participation in this task.

With more and more former colonies receiving their independence and the integration of the IMC into the WCC the relationships between the older and younger churches received new attention. When the CWME gathered at New Mexico in 1963 one of the main points it emphasized, was that Christians all over the world were involved in the missionary movement. This was captured in the theme "Mission in six continents". The era where Western countries were the main "players" in the "mission game" was over.

During the WCC meeting at Upsalla in 1968 the complacency of the church in the face of misery that affected millions of people daily was severely criticized. Structural evils were challenged and the church received a strong warning that it would become irrelevant if it did not become involved in the social improvement of the world. The policy of *apartheid* in South Africa was obviously highlighted during the discussions.

Power sharing between the Church in the North and in the South as well as the debate over the identity of the Church became key topics during the CMWE meeting in Bangkok in 1973. The original idea was to discuss and explore the concept of salvation, but discussions centred more on liberation, in a far wider sense than just its spiritual form.

Scherer quotes a key passage from the Assembly's report on 'Salvation and Social Justice': "The salvation which Christ brought, and in which we participate, offers a comprehensive wholeness in this divided life ... It is a salvation of the soul and the body, of the individual and society, mankind and the 'groaning creation'... Therefore we see the struggles for economic justice, political freedom and cultural renewal as elements in the

total liberation of the world through the mission of God" (1987:122). Obviously African representatives made significant contributions to the discussions.

The WCC's Assembly in Nairobi (1975) confirmed to many evangelicals that the organization was on a dangerously wrong track in spite of the theme 'Jesus Christ frees and unites'. For the first time representatives of non-Christian faiths were invited to present papers. A lot of emphasis was also placed on interfaith dialogue, education for liberation, structures of injustice, struggles for liberation and human development. Many evangelicals felt that the WCC was much more concerned with social reform than spiritual matters.

With the CWME's 1980-assembly in Melbourne, Australia, the significant role of the poor and churches of the poor in God's mission received a lot of attention. In 1989 the relation between Christianity and other religions was discussed and resulted in the following statement: "We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot put any limit to God's saving power. There is a tension between these affirmations which we acknowledge and cannot resolve" (<http://www.wcc-coe.org>: 22 June 2006). Struggles for life and therefore against oppression received attention as well as the Church's relation and responsibilities to the rest of creation.

With the 1996 CWME-conference in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, the main topic was the relation between the gospel and cultures. African theologians had already experienced that independence did not bring the idealized transformation of African societies. They still affirmed the importance of enculturation with other Third World representatives but at the same time stated the need for openness to other cultures. Churches were encouraged to confirm some parts of their cultures while challenging others that could obscure the gospel. Ethnic violence played a big role in these discussions.

The 1998 Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe reflected the disorder evident in many parts of the world. Issues like individual faith and social engagement continued to divide attendees. Discussions on Third World debt, homosexuality, HIV/AIDS and different understandings of the meaning of ecumenism resulted in tense relationships. The theme 'Turn to God – Rejoice in Hope' and the actual discussions seldomly matched.

In 2000 the CWME adopted a paper “*Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today*” as a study document to give guidance for future reflection and activities. In the document two separate definitions were given for mission and evangelism. Mission was described as “... the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel by word (*kerygma*), deed (*diakonia*), prayer and worship (*leiturgia*) and the everyday witness of the Christian life (*martyria*).” (<http://www.wwc-coe.org>: 23 June 2006). To the above was added the role of teaching to create koinonia meaning “... communion with God, communion with people, and communion with creation as a whole (<http://www.wwc-coe.org>: 23 June 2006).

The last WCC Assembly was held in Brazil in February 2006 with the theme ‘God, in your grace, transform the world’. There were representatives from the 348 member churches and four thousand people participated. The desire to actively seek a more just and peaceful world was expressed.

2.5.5.2 All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

On the 20th April 1963 the AACC was formed in Kampala. The theme at this first meeting was Freedom and Unity in Christ and it was conducted “...in the spirit of nationalism that permeated the political scene of the continent at the time.” (<http://www.aacc-ceta.org> 22 June 2006).

Since its inception the AACC had had eight assemblies: the first Assembly at Kampala in 1963, the second in Abidjan (1969), the third in Lusaka (1974), the fourth in Nairobi (1981), the fifth in Lome (1987), the sixth in Harare (1992), the seventh in Addis Ababa (1997) and the last one in Yaounde in 2003.

Themes such as Working with Christ in Africa Today, Troubled but not Destroyed and Come let us Rebuild reflected the circumstances under which discussions took place. In the nineteen sixties and -seventies for instance the main topic of discussion at AACC-meetings was liberation. This was due to the desire of getting rid once and for all of the yoke of colonialism. Obviously there was also a lot of criticism against Western missionaries and their legacy in Africa.

During the 1974 meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, a moratorium on foreign missionaries was suggested. Nthamburi quoted a portion of the Conference's resolve "To enable the African Church to achieve the power of becoming a true instrument of liberating and reconciling the African people, as well as finding solutions to economic and social dependency, our option as a matter of policy has to be a 'moratorium' on external assistance in money and personnel" (1991:72).

With time, however, the emphasis in theological discussions changed. Professor Jesse Mugambi of Kenya told delegates at the 1991 AACC-meeting in Mombasa that reconstruction and social transformation had to become the main topics of theological reflection in the twenty-first century (Karamaga, A. 1993:18-19). The Church in Africa had to move on from bemoaning its past and looking at the future. There was also a strong emphasis on theological education on all levels, from the training of clergy to Christian family education done by parents.

During this meeting the fact that Africa was still seen as a mission field was discussed. Delegates felt this was a warped picture of reality, since "the African Church represents a majority of the people in Africa today and this at a time when Europe and America are experiencing a process of 'dechristianisation'" (Karamaga, A. 1993:21).

Delegates refused to accept this view of Africa by Westerners. At the same time they realized that the "idea of Africa as an eternal mission field can change only if African Churches themselves rethink their missionary vocation and its place in the African context" (Karamaga 1993:21). The Church in Africa had not only to take responsibility of the missionary task in Africa alone. She also had to think on how to take the Gospel back to countries that were in the process of turning its back on Christianity.

CHAPTER 3

CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY

3.1 Mission as being done by Westerners and experienced by Africans

Intentions and actions are often viewed in a different way by the people who act and think in a certain way and by those who are on the receiving end of their actions. This is also true of missionary work. Western missionaries came to Africa driven by motives that made them to act in specific ways. From their point of view their actions were intended for the good of the Africans. Africans on the other hand did not always appreciate the way they were perceived and treated.

3.1.1 Western missionaries: their motives, methods and money

Through the centuries different motives took people to the mission field. Often more than one motive was operative at the same time. David Bosch identified specific motives that dominated the mission scene during certain periods of mission history. During the eighteenth century the desire to glorify God was dominant (1999:285-286). This motive became prominent again from the middle of the twentieth century onward.

At the end of the eighteenth century, however, the emphasis shifted to love and specifically the love *of* God and the love *for* God. Somewhere in the nineteenth century this love-motive changed from compassion and solidarity to pity and condescension. In the words of Bosch: "Love had deteriorated into patronizing charity...the pagans' pitiable state became the dominant motive for mission, not the conviction that they were objects of the love of Christ" (1999:290).

Western missionaries became convinced that the poor, lost people of the non-Western world desired them to bring the truth to the wanting areas. The urge to save the millions of lost heathen also motivated hundreds of Western missionaries in the nineteenth century to go to the ends of the world with the message of salvation. In the early twentieth century

a focus on the physical needs of man gave rise to yet another mission drive that resulted in the development of the so-called social gospel.

Whatever their motives, most Western missionaries believed that they had something to offer the “heathen” that was superior to what they had had up to that point. These missionaries believed that both their religion and culture were superior to those of other regions. The West indeed had an unparalleled advantage over the rest of the world due to their scientific and technological advances. Missionaries therefore brought not only the gospel, but also the Western culture to their respective “mission fields”. They believed that Christianity was the only basis for a healthy civilization, but that civilization had to be moulded along Western lines.

Eventually local churches were established in the respective mission fields. The missionaries operating in the specific area determined when these churches were planted the depth of their “indigenization”. These churches belonged to a lesser order and had to run on the precepts given to them by those who “knew better” how Christ’s body had to function in this world. Zablon Nthamburi wrote: “During the nineteenth century, missionary societies and individual missionaries themselves believed that Africans had no suggestions worth considering on the subject of self-propagation and self-support of the Church (1991:71).

Money played a big role in creating this division in higher and lower level churches. Western missionaries mostly with good intentions wanted to help the individual Christians to survive. They saw how these individuals were separated from their communities or came from the fringes of society in the first place. Missionaries also did their projects with their own socio-economic system in mind and not the operating systems of the people they wanted to help. The results normally were that a master-servant relationship developed between the missionary and “his converts”. Churches on the “mission field” became dependent on the money of the Western church. “Willy-nilly the Western mission agencies taught their converts to feel helpless without money” (Bosch 1999:296).

As was seen earlier colonialism and mission became linked in an inseparable, unhealthy way. In the nineteenth century colonial authorities welcomed missionaries and saw them as agents who could further their cultural, political and economical influences. It also

became customary for missionaries to work in colonies owned by their home countries. British missionaries would therefore work in British colonies and German missionaries in German colonies. The missionaries endorsed this policy believing that their particular governments would bring the best benefits to the people they wanted to reach with the gospel.

By working closely with the authorities missionaries became compromised in many ways. They rarely stood up to challenge the way the colonial authorities treated the indigenous population. They also took the same authoritative stance when it came to “saving the world”. Believing that they were superior to the people they wanted to reach in every way, they led the “young churches” according to their own “superior” methods.

3.1.2 General overview of African perspectives on mission:

With the closing of the colonial era African Christian leaders joined other Third World theologians in their desire to develop their own identity. In order to develop their own identity they looked critically at those who brought Christianity and Christian theology to them.

Nationalism swept through most of the continent and colonialism was painted in dark colours. The desire of the West to stay in control of their previous colonies led to widespread resentment. It became clear that the Western developers were either unwilling or unable to hand over the power to people in the Third World. The technological gap between the West and the rest of the world was extremely big and this placed Western countries in a position of power. They controlled all development projects and became even more powerful in this way. Obviously the resentment of Western power had an effect on African Christian leaders as well.

Colonialism and mission work done by Europeans were seen as “two horses drawing the same cart”, and African theologians were quite outspoken in their criticism of both. They strongly condemned the way Western theologians clothed theology in Western garb and offered it as the only “real” truth about God.

Sergio Torres, a South American theologian voiced the feelings of many African theologians during his opening address of the 1977 Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians in Accra, Ghana. He said: "It has been a real surprise and a painful process to discover that the theology that we people of the Third World have received from the missionaries was not a universal theology, but a European theology, a white theology, a male theology" (1978:4).

J. Mugambi echoed this sentiment. He wrote: "Missionaries did not distinguish in their work of evangelization between the essence of the gospel and the cultural adaptations which had produced the various Western denominations from which the missionaries were sent. Therefore, what the missionaries presented as new 'Christian' life, were Western denominational interpretations and expressions of the gospel and this was not made clear to African converts" (Mugambi 1989: 41)

African theologians did not want to accept Western theology in an uncritical manner anymore. They desired to develop a true African Christianity. John Gatu, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa, therefore appealed in 1971 for missionary withdrawal from parts of the Third World. He said the following to an astounded American audience: "In this address I am going to argue that the time has come for the withdrawal of foreign missionaries from many parts of the Third World, that the churches of the Third World must be allowed to find their own identity, and that the continuation of the present missionary movement is a hindrance to this selfhood of the church" (quoted by Swart 1998:208).

As was said before in order for African theologians to form their own theology they had to look critically at the way they had received the gospel message in the past. By distinguishing between what was gospel and what was Western culture, they could strip the former of the latter and clothe the gospel in an African way.

3.1.3 Perspectives on the role of missionaries in establishing Christianity in Africa

Since Western missionaries had introduced the gospel in Africa, African theologians started to look critically at these men and women and the heritage they had left behind.

Western missionaries were also still busy doing missionary work, but at this point of time there was a large outcry for them to reconsider their position and way of being involved.

Many African Christian leaders felt that the Church on the “Dark Continent” had its roots deep enough in Africa’s soil. While there was a time when Africans were by necessity on the receiving end of mission work and where they needed guidance “from the top” that time was now forever gone. The rest of the Christian world, especially Christians in the West had to accept this fact. Missionaries now had to work under local churches and not have control over them.

The formation of Christian life and thought wasn’t any longer the privilege of expatriate missionaries. Missionaries became increasingly confronted with the fact that they were seen in a much more negative light than they thought. Mission history mostly written by missionaries themselves often portrayed them as heroes saving the heathen.

This type of historiography became unacceptable to many African theologians. Ogbu Kalu from Nigeria described this missionary history as “propagandist and unanalytical” (1979:13). He pointed out that the role of the missionaries received all the attention while the role of the social, economic and political background of the communities in which they worked, had been conveniently ignored.

Another point of criticism was the way Western missionaries viewed traditional African culture. Kalu pointed out how much cultural baggage missionaries brought with them to Africa. They came with their own ideologies, values and cultures that often stood in direct opposition to those of the people of Africa. Western missionaries were so sure of the superiority of their Christian faith and the European socio-economic order that it “produced hard-headed insensitivity toward indigenous cultures” (1979:18).

Mugambi agreed with Kalu’s statement. He wrote: “Missionary activity in the early church respected the religious and cultural backgrounds of the people to whom the church spread...In contrast, the modern missionary movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which effectively introduced Christianity to the interior of East Africa, was negative to the African cultural and religious heritage (1989:39-40).

He continued to say that many missionaries shared the view that the European peoples were superior to other races while Africans were seen as primitive and pagan. They therefore ignored or invalidated that which people believed for generations.

This attitude had the following outcome: “The negative approach towards the African cultural and religious heritage led...some to reject Christianity along with the Western culture which was being imposed upon them, and others to adapt what they had received to their own backgrounds, according to their understanding and needs” (Mugambi 1989: 40).

The superiority complex of Western European missionaries as perceived by many African believers led to a sharp reaction from African theologians. They felt that missionaries could not be allowed to dictate with this type of attitude to African Christians how they should live out their faith and understand God. Instead they had to acknowledge that the Western missionary heritage was very far from perfect. Lamin Sanneh for instance wrote: “It is clear that if we assess the effectiveness of Western missions by statistical standards of horizontal spread, they would fail abysmally. The most spectacular gains by Christianity occurred by other hands or after the formal withdrawal of missionaries” (1983b:165).

It is important, however, to note that Sanneh did not want to deny that missionaries had a part to play in the rooting of Christianity in Africa. His point is just that too much was made of their role at the expense of African Christians who according to him played the bigger role in this.

Sanneh explained that missionaries indeed took the first step in bringing Christianity to Africa with Africans serving as secondary agents. However “...in the process of local assimilation Africans were to the fore, with missionaries now in a reverse position, overwhelmingly inferior in the local adaptation of a religion they helped to introduce” (1983b:166). African Christians indeed played the major role in the dissemination of Christianity into African communities.

Although Western missionaries formed part of the bigger picture of establishing Christianity in Africa their place in this picture was significantly smaller than presumed

before. African theologians wanted the warped account of how Christianity became truly part of life in Africa to be replaced with a more accurate one.

3.1.4 Clash of worldviews

Another point of criticism against missionaries was that they had superimposed their individualistic worldview on a society where the community stood at the centre of African self-understanding. Mugambi wrote: “Beyond the ‘civilization’ of African ‘natives’, missionaries hoped to prepare their converts for the individualistic ‘salvation’ of ‘souls’ in heaven, to ‘save’ them from damnation in hell” (1989:41). It indeed led to unnecessary tension in the lives of converts who had to conform to a worldview alien to them.

The result was that “African converts, faced with this situation, accepted Christianity, but made their own syntheses between the newly introduced way of life and the traditional African one...those African individuals who chose to follow Christianity recognized themselves as belonging to both identities – to their kinship and ethnic groups on the one hand, and to the Christian Church on the other” (Mugambi 1989:42).

In an effort to redress the negative view missionaries revealed toward traditional African religions many African theologians felt it was important to defend the value of these religions. After pointing at the fact that missionaries had tried to destroy traditional African culture (see Kalu 1979:20) several leading theologians reacted by trying to show how these religions were actually the door that made Christianity acceptable to many Africans.

David Bosch commented in the *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*: “This then, is a major item on the agenda of theologians in Africa: the nature and theological significance of the African religious heritage ... their involvement in the study of African religions is that of passionate apologists. They have something to argue. And the essence of that argument is: contrary to what the missionaries taught, there is indeed real continuity between our “old” religion and the Christian faith” (1984:21).

However, in their enthusiasm to show how much resemblance there were between the Christian God and traditional African beliefs many scholars went too far. Evangelical African scholars like Byang Kato wanted African thinkers to develop their theology in line

with what the Bible taught. In 1973 he presented a paper where he said the following: “Evangelical Christians know of only one theology- Biblical theology –though it may be expressed in the context of each cultural milieu” (1985:12).

Byang also had an appreciation for traditional African religions, but within very clear limits. He wrote: “In the context of African traditional religions, the worship is merely an indication of an honest craving for God, which can be fulfilled only in biblical revelation through the incarnate Christ who died and rose again. This should be the preoccupation of the church in Africa” (1985:19-20). The implication of Byang’s words was that mission work done by Africans in Africa had to be based on biblical revelation.

It also seems as if the “pre-occupation” with bringing traditional African religions and Christianity closer together was a time-limited event. This, in any case, was the view of T.A.Mofokeng in his discussion of David Bosch’s writings. He reacted to Bosch’s statement that much theological thought went into reconciling Christianity and traditional African religions. While Mofokeng did not deny that it was true of the past he wrote: “...it seems to me ... that Bosch does not clearly distinguish the Africa of the past, in which traditional religion was a major source for African Theology, from contemporary Africa, in which its status has been significantly reduced” (1990:)

The whole movement, whether it may be declining in some parts of Africa or not, has important consequences for the Church’s mission efforts. A clear example of how it could result in conflict between two groups of African Christians can be found in Northern Bahr al Ghazal in Southern Sudan. Several Episcopal pastors related to me personally how they could not accept the way leaders from another denomination accepted and allowed cultural practices that were clearly unbiblical.

The strong stance of these evangelists led to intense conflict. On the other hand many people did not like their new explanation of what it meant to be a Christian. They felt comfortable with the idea of praying to God while still retaining parts of their old religious practices. Traditional believers, who did not feel too threatened by the way Christianity was propagated in the past, also opposed this new gospel proclamation vehemently.

3.1.5 Development of African theologies

After taking a critical view at the heritage they had received from Western missionaries, African theologians desired to develop a more appropriate theology for the continent. Since Africa is so big and has so many diverse cultures and political backgrounds, developing a uniform African theology was impossible. The living situation in different parts of Africa played a definite role in how different theologians formed their views and theology. Mugambi wrote: “The concerns of African Christian theologians arise out of the various backgrounds in which Christianity was introduced, and the contexts in which the churches in various parts of the African continent have to live and witness” (1989:48).

In 1976 Charles Nyamiti of Tanzania distinguished three distinct streams in African theology. He categorized them as the speculative school, the social and biblical school, and the militant school (1976:31-32).

Tite Tienou, again, referred to the distinctions made by Justin Ukpong when describing different types of African theology, namely African enculturation theology, black theology and liberation theology (1998:6). Obviously the perspectives and approaches of these schools and theologies would not look the same. It is important to know how much a specific theologian’s background would influence his theology and consequently his view of missions.

In recent years the emphasis on liberation could not be maintained since the political situation has changed. Chipenda said in 1997 that the glue that kept Africa united namely its condemnation of apartheid in South Africa and South Africa’s domination of Namibia was about to melt. He writes: “Until now in Africa every time our leaders meet, the accusing finger is pointed at South Africa. The *apartheid* policy provides elements for passionate discussions and crystallizes our unity. The hour of truth is coming. The Church in each country should seek God’s guidance and try to develop in each place a justice-prone, healing and reconciling ministry” (1997:23).

Mugambi agrees with Chipenda and concludes that the political changes in South Africa, Namibia and Western Sahara will force African theologians to adapt their thinking. “The logical outcome ... would have to be a shift of gear on the part of contemporary African

thinkers, from an emphasis on liberation to engagement in social transformation and reconstruction” (1997:51). Transformation and reconstruction theologies are in the process of being developed.

3.1.6 Missio Dei from an African perspective

All true theologies will take mission and missions seriously. The expression of mission as *Missio Dei* came to Africa through the development of missiological reflection in the West. Although the concept of *Missio Dei* underwent some modifications in the West in later years it seems that the ideas formulated at Willingen are still accepted by most African theologians.

In the introduction of the book: “Mission in African Christianity: critical essays in missiology”, the editors wrote, “Mission is primarily *Missio Dei*. It is a God-centred activity, not people and Church centred ... The Church is sent by the Spirit and the Spirit is sent by the Son and the Son is sent by the Father” (Nasimiyu-Wasike & Waruta 2000:1). David Niringiye supports this idea: “Our Christian mission is rooted in God’s mission ... our mission is his mission...we can only accomplish God’s mission in God’s way.” (1996:66)

Niringiye emphasized that God’s mission is about life. Its purpose is to restore and redeem man and the rest of his creation. It is also holy and good with the result that He desires to re-establish, develop and complete holiness and goodness. Since it is also a mission of love and justice the restorative and redemptive aspects as well as its condemnation of evil is apparent. Finally he pointed out that “In keeping with God’s nature and character, God’s mission is universal, cosmic and eternal in scope, holistic in nature, and centred in people” (1996:68).

Niringiye made it clear that mission is much more than just a focus on man’s soul. It is holistic, taking serious man’s spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. Theologians outside the Third World share this concern. Bosch quoted Carl F.H. Henry who wrote: “There is no room...for a gospel that is indifferent to the needs of the total man nor of the global man” (1999:404).

In working with God to “re-establish, nurture and complete holiness and goodness” (Niringiye 1996:61) the Church in mission must take serious structures that inhibit holiness and goodness. Theologians belonging to the militant school of African theology would heartily agree with this!

While man is at the centre of God’s mission, he does not exclusively enjoy God’s attention. God’s mission plan stretches as wide and far as the borders of his created universe. He is concerned about life in its broadest sense.

God does not only provide us with mission theory, but He is our supreme Example. “Mission is founded in the self-giving and self-emptying model of the Trinity. Those who are called to engage in missionary activity share in God’s mission and travel the same road taken by Jesus Christ – the road of poverty, Obedience, Service and Self-sacrifice” (Nasimiyu-Wasike & Waruta 2000:1-2).

The fact that mission begins and ends with God, is according to Nasimiyu-Wasike and Waruta “... the source of our boldness, strength and joy as we participate in the *Missio Dei*” (2000:2)

Alfred Acur-Okodi, a Kenyan church leader commenting on the relationship between the missionary God and the church, wrote: “If God is a missionary God, then His institution, the Church in all parts of the world, will be a missionary institution. And if Christ, the great divine Missionary to the world, is Head of the Church, then the Church as his body will be a missionary body” (1996:21). God’s character and example is therefore of more than just theoretical interest to his Church.

God’s mission must, according to most leading African theologians, become the Church’s mission. On the Micah Network website a definition of the term ‘integral mission’ is given from an African perspective (<http://www.micahnetwork.org> 23 June 2006).

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel of the kingdom of God. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other.

Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God, which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and social action, the spiritual and material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are the heart of our integral task

Proclamation and demonstration are very important concepts, as well as the statement that evangelism and social involvement are not two loose-standing entities but two parts of a whole.

Practical implementation of the above truths in the Sudan Church is not always easy. The reason is the disproportionate involvement of non-Sudanese in the country. Human and material resources from outside Sudan control a lot of what is currently going on in terms of development and relief. The effect is that church leaders often facilitate the flow of these external resources instead of utilizing that, which is naturally available in the country.

It is understandable in view of the scale and duration of destruction in Southern Sudan and there is indeed a place for outside intervention. However one sad result is that the internal efforts of those church leaders and members who do not have access to expatriate resources look much less attractive than what expatriates have to offer. In some cases unhealthy comparisons can lead to discouragement and lack of motivation to develop indigenous methods of addressing these needs.

When reflecting on and doing mission work the subject of context must be seriously considered. It was especially in South Africa during its years of apartheid that this became a burning issue. T A Mofokeng, speaking from South Africa in 1990, took a radical stance. He stated "... the African church and the theologian should be involved and committed on

the side of the downtrodden of Africa in their contemporary struggles. It should seriously attempt to read the historical text written on their scarred and bruised bodies and souls, on their disrupted social structures and relations, and derive leading questions from the heart of that involvement” (1990:172). Although he spoke about theology at large his words can be applied to missiology as well.

The developing of an African theology and consequently a mission theology from his point of view had to be steered by the historical reality in which a specific group of Christians lived at a specific time. This is a challenge for the Church in Sudan since the war has immense disruption and destruction.

Western theologians agree with Mofokeng’s emphasis on taking the context in which mission takes place seriously. Charles van Engen, for instance, explained that mission theology is a process of reflection and action involving a movement from the biblical text to the faith community in its context (1996:26).

He depicted the theology of mission through a graph of three inter-linked circles. The first circle represents the Biblical text, the second symbolizes the faith community that is actively busy with mission and the third represents the context in which these mission activities take place. All three circles must receive serious attention not apart from one another, but as an integrative whole. It is the task of those who develop a theology of mission to reflect from the Bible upon God’s mission, the human instruments He used in his mission, the world in which He carried out his mission and his overall mission purpose.

The time and circumstances in which mission takes place, are important aspects of context. Nasimiyu-Wasike & Waruta wrote that God’s mission has always been historical and sensitive to the process of human history and development: “Thus the Church’s mission must correlate itself to times and be attuned to different ages and cultures” (2000:2).

T A Mofokeng, writing from apartheid South Africa, took this line of thought a step further. He stated that the time and circumstances in which theology (and therefore missiology by implication) is developed, has a big influence on the ordering of topics. He wrote:

“Relevant contextual missiology must realize that “...*timing* or *historical consciousness* affects the determination of theological themes as well as their prioritisation. A wrong selection of theological themes and their elevation to the top of the theological agenda at the wrong time, simply because they constitute biblical teaching, may have a negative social and psychological impact, and adversely affect the concrete situation as well as the agents of change” (1990:174).

In his context, he felt it was wrong to speak about forgiveness and reconciliation while evil structures still made the lives of thousands of non-white South Africans miserable. Applying Mofokeng’s insights to missions in Sudan it is important that those who take the gospel out to non-Christians must understand something of what themes have priority in the present Sudanese situation. Peace and reconciliation will definitely be high on such a priority list since the civil war is over and old wounds need to be healed.

African theologians want theology to be relevant and actual. Many of them felt that Western missionaries did not take oppressive political and economic structures serious enough in the past while trying to bring the gospel to oppressed communities. The result was that African Christians in many parts of the continent had to accept a message of redemption while living their daily lives as second-class human beings. In recent years African theologians found that it is no easy task to elevate people living in poverty. Pointing to past mistakes is one thing, but it is an entirely different matter to find creative solutions.

In Sudan many Southerners feel that they were and are reduced to second-class citizenship by Islam and the agents of Islam. Expatriate Christians working in Sudan have a wonderful opportunity to treat Sudanese Christians in a “first-class” way and they must not let this opportunity pass them.

C.M. Mwikamba stresses the importance of the world in missions. He stresses that the Church cannot work from an “other-worldly” position, but that she must facilitate the coming of God’s kingdom in this world we live in now. “This kingdom can only be realized if the churches are willing to serve the world, to be part and parcel of human history – a history in which the churches are called to be a sign of hope” (Mwikamba 2000:12).

The early church was an example of doing missionary work in this world while not being of the world. Their daily realities forced them to develop a theology of an earthly kingdom and a heavenly one, but this did not stop them from trying to bring God's light and love into their present world.

The world we live in must not be described only in terms of the human race that inhabits the earth, but the earth itself with its many creatures. Mwikambi states that the roots of environmental mission can be traced back to the first chapters of Genesis (2000:28).

In creating the world the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were present. The Triune God is the Source of all life and his intention was that all his creatures had to share this God-given gift. God created the earth in such a way that his creatures would exist in an interdependent manner. The human race, for instance, cannot survive without the other parts of creation like the fauna and flora. As the crown of God's creation man was given the task of taking care of the rest of creation (Gn 2:15). This God-given task is still true today and must therefore be seen as part of the Church's mission.

CHAPTER 4

THE GOSPEL IN SUDAN: ANCIENT HISTORY

4.1 Kush

Woe to the land of whirring winds along the rivers of Cush, which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water. Go, swift messengers, to a people tall and smooth-skinned, to a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers. All you people of the world, you who live on the earth, when a banner is raised on the mountains, you will see it ... [A]t that time gifts will be brought to the Lord Almighty from a people tall and smooth-skinned, from a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers

(Is 18:1-7)

Christians in present day Sudan and especially Southerners often refer to the Old Testament passages that mentioned Kush. Many believe these prophecies were fulfilled in their lifetime. They use the fact that thousands of Sudanese had accepted the Christian faith in the last few decades after going through severe suffering as proof. It is therefore good to start this section on the history of Christianity in Sudan at the time when Kush (sometimes spelled Cush or even Kash) existed as a thriving kingdom on the banks of the Nile.

Kush was the Old Egyptian name for the country that lay directly south of Egypt's border. Roland Werner explains the inaccurate explanation of Kush as referring to Ethiopia. It came about through a misunderstanding of the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Those responsible for the Septuagint translated the word Kush with Aithiopia "a term that the ancient Greeks used for any country to the south of their known world" (Werner, Anderson & Wheeler 2000:23). He conceded that Kush in the Bible sometimes referred to all the areas south of Egypt. However its primary meaning was to designate the country

immediately south of Egypt along the Nile. In today's terms Kush fell geographically in the North of Sudan.

4.2 Meroe

At first Kush was a vice-regency of Egypt. Eventually it gained its independence and developed into the so-called Empire of Meroe. The Queen Mother of this Empire was known as Katoki or Kandake. In Acts 8:27 we read: "So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians."

Although the eunuch is described as an Ethiopian it is important to remember that the term Ethiopia often referred to the Upper Nile region. Werner also made out a strong case that the eunuch must have been a court official of the empire of Meroe and more specifically the treasurer of the Queen Mother or Kandake. His reasons for this were that there was never a Candace in what is today known as Ethiopia and that the eunuch would have taken another road had he really come from there (2000:24).

Baur agrees with this understanding of the "Ethiopian" eunuch actually being a Nubian (2005:31). The first non-Jewish Christian we know about therefore was probably a Sudanese! There is however no evidence that his conversion led to the establishment of a Christian community in Meroe.

4.3 Nubia

4.3.1 A historical overview

The kingdom of Meroe collapsed around 300 AD. One reason was the continuous wars with the neighbouring kingdom of Axum. Meroe was already on the decline by the time it was overrun by "a warrior tribe of fleet horsemen skilled with the sword and the bow...." (Shaw 1996:66). Axum was a Christianized kingdom.

Another reason for Meroe's collapse was the arrival of Sudanese tribes. They came especially from the west (from what is today known as Kordofan and Darfur) being

attracted by the fertility of the Nile valley. These tribes were known as the Noba or the Nubians. The Nubians formed three states along the Nile namely Nobatia (or Nobadia), Makuria and Alodia (also known by its Arabic name Alwa). Nobatia was the northernmost state followed by Makuria and then Alodia the furthest south. The three states together were known as Nubia. A ruling elite led by a king controlled Nubia's three kingdoms. They enriched themselves through trade in gold and slaves while the rural masses had to survive through subsistence farming and fishing (Shaw 1996:66).

From very early on the Nubian states had contact with Christianity. Egyptian monks had fled southward from their own country to escape the persecution of certain Roman emperors. They took their Christian faith with them. Christian traders from Egypt also visited the Nubian states while Nubian traders visited Christian Egypt. There is some evidence of a Christian community and a church in the capital city of Nobatia called Faras around 450 (Baur 2005:31). It also seems the capital city of Alodia/Alwa called Soba received Christian input from the neighbouring kingdom of Axum.

In the middle of the sixth century active mission outreach to Nubia began. At the time there were two theological streams concerning the nature of Christ namely monophysitism and dyophysitism. Monophysites believed that Christ had only one nature namely a divine one. Dyophysites maintained that He had a divine and a human nature. The Dyophysite stream was also known as Orthodox Christianity. Both groups desired to win new adherents to their side.

Theodoros the Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt was a staunch Monophysite. Due to his convictions he was forced into exile in Constantinople. Just before his death he consecrated Julian "... an old man of great worth" (Groves 1948:49) as a missionary bishop for Nubia. Julian spoke to Empress Theodora about his wish to reach out to the people of Nubia. Theodora was a prostitute in Alexandria before she was converted through the ministry of Monophysite monks (Shaw 1996:67). From her conversion Theodora was a loyal supporter of Monophysitism. When Julian approached her she gladly supplied him with gifts and supplies for his mission journey.

Theodora's husband Emperor Justinian I on the other hand was a Dyophysite or orthodox believer. When his wife told him about the desire of Julian to be a missionary to the Nubians he decided to rather send missionaries with convictions that matched his.

Theodora realized she had to act fast if she wanted Monophysite Christianity to reach Nubia first. She also sent a group of missionaries south. Both groups had to pass through Egypt to reach Nubia. Theodora quickly sent a letter to the provincial governor of southern Egypt warning him that he would pay with his life if he allowed the orthodox missionary convoy to pass through the border ahead of the Monophysite group (Werner et al 2000:30).

Although the Dyophysite group reached his provincial capital first the governor made all kinds of excuses to hold them up until the Monophysite missionaries overtook them. The result was that he kept his head on his shoulders and Nobatia became a Monophysite kingdom.

The king of Nobatia welcomed Bishop Julian and his followers in 543. He and all his royal officials received instruction in the Christian faith and were baptized. Bishop Julian remained in Nobatia until 545/6 and then returned to Constantinople. One of his companions Bishop Theodoros of Philae remained in Nobatia for some time. He made regular visits there after his return to Philae.

There is an interesting story coming from this time. In a town called Qasr Ibrim a cathedral was built with the stone blocks of an old Meroitic temple. Werner wrote, "...while the church went up, the temple went down, giving a vivid demonstration that indeed a new era had dawned for Nubia" (2000:32). However for the dawn to break out into a bright new day missionaries still had to wait another twenty years.

The group of Dyophysite missionaries sent by emperor Justinian I eventually reached Nobatia. Nobatia's king refused them a hearing. They then continued their journey southwards to the kingdom of Makuria and established their brand of Christianity there. Greek Byzantine inscriptions on graves served as evidence of the existence of orthodox Christianity in the area (Groves 1948:50). It seems as if orthodox Christianity eventually became the dominant form of the Christian faith in spite of Monophysitism being the more popular in Nubia at first (see Shaw 1996:70-71).

Somewhere in the second part of the sixth century a delegation from Makuria visited Constantinople thanking the Emperor for making them part of Christendom. They reported that Makuria as a whole accepted the (dyophysite) Christian faith.

In Nobatia Christianity still had to be rooted in the country. Bishop Julian laid the spiritual foundation in the region but it was through the labours of Bishop Longinus that Christianity was truly accepted. Groves quotes John of Ephesus who heard the following report from a Nobatian ambassador to the Emperor: "Though we were Christians in name, yet we did not really know what Christianity was until Longinus came to us" (1948:50-51).

Longinus was consecrated as Bishop of Nobatia in 566 but he only reached his diocese in 569 or 570. The reason was that the new Emperor Justin II was also a Dyophysite and wanted to prevent the spread of Monophysitism in Nubia. He therefore imprisoned the new bishop shortly after his consecration. It was only after three years that Longinus could escape from Constantinople (Werner et al 2000:33).

When he eventually reached Nobatia he was received with great joy. He instructed the people afresh in the Christian faith, preached, built a church and set up the needed structure for the church to be administered in a proper way. Bishop Longinus apparently took Egyptian priests with him and also consecrated Nubians. The liturgical language they used was most probably Greek.

After spending six years in Nobatia, Longinus was called to Alexandria for the consecration of a new Patriarch. Things unfortunately did not go very well in Egypt. Church conflicts forced him to stay in Arabia for five years before he could return to his diocese.

While Bishop Longinus was in Egypt and then in forced exile in Arabia the king of the southernmost Nubian state Alodia wrote to the king of Nobatia. He asked for Longinus to be sent over to his kingdom. The king wanted the gospel to be preached in his region as well. Longinus' exile prevented him of going but when the Alodians heard he was back in Nobatia they sent a delegation with a second request. Around 580 Longinus finally went (Werner et al 2000:36-37).

His journey wasn't an easy one because the Makurians who had accepted the Dyophysitic version of Christianity tried to prevent his going. The Alodians didn't want Dyophysitic teachings so the Makurians reasoned it must then be better that they receive no teaching at all! By taking a hazardous detour Longinus succeeded in reaching Alodia. After only a few days the king and his nobles were baptized. It wasn't only the royal court

that accepted Christianity, but also a big number of Alodian citizens. Longinus used to convert pagan temples into churches. He destroyed the pictures of traditional gods and replaced them with a cross (Werner et al 2000:37). Mainly through his ministry "Christianity in Nubia ... struck root and flourished" (Groves 1948:51).

Werner made a significant observation concerning the church structures in the three Nubian states: "In all ecclesiastical customs the Nubian churches imitated their mother churches in Alexandria, Syria, Palestine and Byzantium. It was only over a period of time that local elements were integrated into the life and cultural expression of the church" (2000:38). The adoption of a non-indigenous Christian form and especially a dependence on Alexandrian leaders eventually led to the weakening of the Nubian Church.

As the church grew and expanded more episcopal sees were established. Nubians started to fill different ecclesiastical positions even to the position of bishop. People were taught and baptized but conversion was never forced. Lack of manpower inhibited evangelism. However, after one or two generations the Christianization of Nubia was more or less complete. In the words of Werner "... to be a Nubian meant to be a Christian" (2000:39).

For a few decades the Nubian church could grow and settle itself in relative peace. There was friendly contact with Egypt and the larger Byzantine Empire. Then in 618 the situation changed abruptly. Persian Sassanids invaded Egypt. They destroyed many churches and monasteries. It seems the invaders entered the northern parts of Nubia as well, but they were quickly repulsed. The Persians destroyed many cultural and Christian centres in the Byzantine Empire and although their conquest was short-lived they weakened the Empire considerably.

Between 638 and 641 a second wave of attackers swept into Egypt. This time the attackers were Arabs under the leadership of their Islamic Caliphs. They had already conquered Syria and Palestine and it was only a matter of time before they were also in full control of Egypt. Nubia's Christian contacts were now under Islamic rule.

The next logical step for the Arab invaders was to continue their conquest to the south. Their leaders thought it would be quite an easy endeavour but the fierce resistance of the Nubians surprised them. Two invasions, the first in 641/2 and the second in 652, failed. After that the Arabs and Nubians agreed on a cease-fire. Eventually the cease-fire

changed into a permanent treaty of non-aggression, called the *Baqt*. The peace treaty “... virtually guaranteed Nubian independence and – with later modifications – was to last for 700 years” (Sundkler & Steed 2000:31).

Yusuf Hasan points out a significant spiritual effect of the *Baqt* on the people of Nubia: “The treaty opened the frontier for the influx of Islamic influences that were carried by traders and Arab tribesmen who penetrated in large numbers. They intermarried with the Sudanese peoples ... assimilated Arab genealogies and adopted Arabic language and culture” (Hasan 2002:25). This process of Islamization was peaceful and not enforced on anybody.

Muslim attacks prior to the cease-fire brought the two northern Nubian states of Nobatia and Makuria to the realization that they had to stand together. It took them quite a while to overcome their differences but by 700 AD these two kingdoms were united into one (Shaw 1996:93). There are suggestions that this unification took place much earlier.

Whatever may be the case the first king of the United Kingdom was called Merkurios. Church leaders and aristocrats called him the new Constantine since he did so much to develop the Nubian Church (Sundkler & Steed 2000:32). He built many churches and helped to develop a strong (monophysite) Christian Nubian kingdom that was respected by its neighbours.

Nubia had its fair share of problems. The second king resigned to become a monk, the fourth was banished to an island in the Nile and the fifth was murdered after being king for only six months. In spite of all the difficulties Nubia experienced a time of great prosperity. It also was powerful enough to flex its muscles against Egypt.

Around the middle of the eighth century the Muslim governor of Egypt threw the Coptic Patriarch into prison. Kyriakos the Nubian king demanded that he had to be released since he was also the ultimate head of the church in Nubia. When the governor refused Kyriakos gathered his army and invaded Egypt. In the end the Muslim governor was forced to release the patriarch and also pleaded the Nubian army to withdraw (Groves 1948:106). This event made a strong impression on everybody. It gave new status to the Nubian kingdom as being a strong Christian kingdom that could not be treated with contempt.

4.3.2 Nubia in its prosperous years

Building on the strength it gained from the way Egypt viewed them Nubia became all the more prosperous. However relations became strained in the first few decades of the ninth century. This nearly resulted in war. Instead the reigning Nubian king sent his son George to visit the Caliph in Baghdad.

George started his journey in 835 and it proved to be very successful. It added further fame to the Nubian kingdom. George traveled through Muslim territory holding a golden cross in his hand while another cross was carried openly before him. He also visited the Muslim Sultan as the head of an independent Christian kingdom. George's father crowned him as king before he left Nubia. It made a big impression on everybody (Werner et al 2000:51-53).

In 969 the Fatimids conquered Egypt thereby becoming the new rulers of Nubia's northern neighbour. They had a peaceful relationship with Nubia for two full centuries. Right in the beginning of this relationship the military commander of the Fatimid army Jawhar as-Siqilli sent a special messenger to Nubia. The envoy travelled through large parts of Nubia. When visiting the royal court at Dongola he presented a letter in which Jawhar implored the Nubian king to convert to Islam. The king assembled his royal council and refuted all the arguments in favour of Islam written in the letter. Instead of accepting Islam he asked their visitor to become a Christian (Werner et al 2000:54)!

Nubia's influence far exceeded its borders. Many envoys from Central African tribes visited the royal courts in the capital city of Nubia. During such visits they must have heard the gospel message in some way or another. The king of Abbysinia for instance had so much faith in Nubia's ability to bring change that he requested King George II of Nubia to mediate between his kingdom and the Patriarch of Alexandria. George II was indeed successful in his role as mediator.

The 11th and 12th centuries witnessed the peak of Nubia's power. In 1050 the two highest officials of the Fatimids in Cairo were "Nubian" eunuchs. There were also many Nubian soldiers in the Egyptian army (Werner et al 2000:57). On the negative side many of the soldiers accepted Islam and brought their faith to Nubia during the time of their retirement.

Nubia also had a strong influence on eastern, southern and especially western Sudan (Sundkler & Steed 2000:32). This influence must have had a spiritual impact.

4.3.3 Nubian understanding of Christianity

“Almost all available evidence regarding the inner life of the Nubian Church is connected with church buildings” (Baur 2005:32). In Nubia the remains of about 200 churches have been identified. There might have been double this amount but it seems clear that every village had its own church. In the bigger centers the Nubians built cathedrals like the cathedrals in Faras, Qasr Ibrim and Dongola.

During Nubia’s golden ages frescoes were painted onto the walls of most churches. In the cathedral of Faras over 150 such paintings were found. The paintings spanned the time between the eighth and thirteenth centuries. Scenes that were regularly painted were helpful in understanding the way Nubian Christians saw God and his people. A painting of the Madonna and Saint Peter together with Bishop Petros where the bishop had a dark brown face indicated “... the definitive Africanization of the hierarchy at this time” (Sundkler & Steed 2000:33).

From the frescoes on church walls, Christian graffiti in churches and other holy places and the writings in different languages it is possible to identify some important Christian traits of the Nubian church.

The person of Jesus Christ played a central role in the faith of these believers. Nubian kings were crowned in the so-called Church of Jesus in Dongola. It was done in this way to remind them that they were under the authority of Jesus, the King of all kings. Christ’s position of having supreme authority and being the Judge of the world was central in the understanding of Nubian Christianity (Werner et al 2000:78).

Jesus was also portrayed as the Bringer of the Good News, the Image of the invisible God and the One who is victorious over all evil and the forces of chaos. “In an often hostile environment, inhabited by disease and influenced by hostile spiritual forces, the power of Jesus to defeat all the powers of evil was of crucial importance” (Werner et al 2000:79).

Although Nubian Christians clearly believed in Christ's atoning death on the cross his resurrection and the hope it brought played a much more important role in their faith. The cross was seen in Nubian Christianity as "...both a symbol of suffering and a celebration of victory over death and sin" (Shaw 1996:95). Through the cross Christ brought salvation to the world. It also served as a reminder of his Second Coming. These perspectives led the Nubian Christians to adorn their crosses with jewels, garlands, bells and palm branches.

Crosses were not limited to the church buildings. Large wooden ones were erected in many public places in towns and even many churches were built in the form of a cross. In their personal devotion Nubian Christians often made the sign of the cross. It was also stamped on pottery they used daily and painted on the walls of their houses. In the thirteenth century many Nubian Christians even underwent the "baptism with fire" where they had a cross burnt on their own foreheads and on the foreheads of their children with a red-hot iron (Werner et al 2000:79-80).

From excavations it is clear that many adult baptisms took place in the early years of Christianity in Nubia. However, from the shrinking in size of baptismal basins infant baptism became the norm after Nubia officially accepted Christianity.

Saints were venerated and of these Mary had the pre-eminence. The same was true of the angels. Archangels and the four living beings received the most attention. It is even suggested that the archangel Michael could have been the patron angel of Nubia. Concerning the veneration of the angelic order it is important to note the words of Werner: "Nonetheless, the four living beings formed part of the basic theology of Nubian Christians, *as they served to enhance the glory of the one and only God*" (2000:82 emphasis mine).

Nubian Christians created their own Nubian script somewhere between the eighth and ninth centuries. Most of the surviving writings consist of Bible portions and other religious texts. Portions from at least seven Old Testament and fifteen New Testament books were translated into the Nubian script called Old Nubian (Werner et al 2000:74).

4.3.4 Church Administration

“Like North Africa centuries before, the church of Nubia was a church of bishops” (Shaw 1996:94). Topping the church pyramid was the Patriarch of Alexandria as Nubia’s supreme spiritual father. Only the Alexandrian patriarch could ordain metropolitan bishops for the Nubian Church and the ordination always took place in Egypt. Metropolitan bishops were not always Egyptians or Syrians. In fact Nubian bishops increasingly filled these positions. Eventually the dependence on a foreign leader was one of the major reasons that contributed to the downfall of Christianity in Nubia.

Bishops were responsible for the ordination of priests who served in their own parishes and received most of their support from congregation members. Most of the priests were Nubians. Further down the hierarchical church pyramid were archdeacons, deacons and sub-deacons as well as some other lower-level church offices. Monasteries abounded in Nubia and more than thirty has been identified (Werner et al 2000:82-83).

4.3.5 Decline and eventual disappearance of Christianity in Nubia

The year 1172 was a turning point in the history of Nubia. It was the time when Turkish Mamluks took over control of Egypt. Unlike their predecessors they were distinctly negative against Christianity (Baur 2005:33). Turkish soldiers attacked northern Nubia and although the attack was repulsed it was clear that Nubia has lost much of its self-confidence. The kingdom began to turn inward “... its confidence in its earthly and heavenly kings shaken by invasion and fear” (Shaw 1996:96). In 1265 the new ruler of Egypt Sultan Baybars launched a military expedition into Nubia killing many people and taking many captives. His success proved Nubia’s growing weakness.

The downward spiral of Nubia’s fortunes cannot be laid at the door of external forces alone. Internal problems were just as much responsible for the kingdom’s downfall. King David officially informed the Turkish sultan in Egypt that he forced his blind uncle from the throne. For reasons not clearly known the new Nubian monarch and his successor launched attacks on Egyptian towns resulting in the death of senior Egyptian officials. Sultan Baybars retaliated by sending his army to attack Nubia. The invaders defeated the Nubian army and captured Faras and Old Dongola (Shaw 1996:96). During the attack big

parts of Dongola including the famous “Church of Jesus” were destroyed. A Nubian prince Shekanda was placed on the throne as a puppet king.

Prince Shekanda took an oath of faithfulness to the Muslim Sultan Baybars and also handed to provinces over to him. Nubia’s independence herewith came to an end. One of the results of this new situation was that all non-Muslim Nubians had either to convert to Islam, pay annual head tax or die. Most Nubians chose to pay the head tax (Werner et al 2000:92-93).

Shekanda ruled less than a year before he was murdered. One Barak who had a natural right to the throne followed him. In 1276 or 1277 Sultan Baybars also passed away. His successor was a man called Qalawun. During his rule he ordered two destructive campaigns to quench Nubian rebellions. The campaigns hastened the downfall of the erstwhile powerful kingdom with its king unable to protect his country.

Abdalla Barshambo was the first Muslim king of Nubia. He was hugely unpopular because of his arrogance and disregard for tradition. On 29 May 1317 he turned a room in the royal palace into a mosque. Christian Nubia was now not only under the heel of Islamic Egypt but which was also ruled by a local Muslim king (Werner et al 2000:97-98). This did not mean that Christianity immediately ceased to exist. On the contrary, it seemed as if most Nubians at this time were still Christians worshipping freely in churches.

During the fourteenth century the arrival of Arab nomads in Nubia had a significant effect on Christian Nubia. Inter-marriages between Muslim settlers and Christian Nubian women weakened Christianity and led to the loss of much land (Baur 2005:33). At first the Nubian kings tried to resist the Arab nomads, but soon realized the futility of their actions. Their strategy of intermarriage in an effort to win the favour of the Arabs resulted in the fragmentation of Nubia into small principalities.

Christianity did not die even at this late time. The kingdom of Dotawo was one of the principalities that came into existence. It was about the third of the size of the original Nubian kingdom and its rulers were Christian kings. Dotawo received its bishops from the Coptic Church in Alexandria. This kingdom was very much isolated, but here Nubian Christianity continued undisturbed for many years (Werner et al 2000:100-101).

How long Christianity continued in the Kingdom of Dotawo and its surrounding areas is not clear. Some Christian traditions remained, and up to 1742 there were still very small groups of Christians to be found. How much they really understood of true Christianity is difficult to answer. Somewhere between the 18th and 19th centuries the last flickering flames of Nubian Christianity finally fizzled out.

4.4 Alodia/Alwa

While all the turmoil continued in the united Nubian kingdom the southern Nubian kingdom of Alodia still experienced prosperity. Early in the thirteenth century an Arab visitor made mention of 400 churches in the southernmost kingdom of Nubia (Baur 2005:32). In the capital city Soba there were several churches and monasteries. Werner quoted a certain Al-Aswani who described Soba in the following way: “It has fine buildings and large monasteries, churches rich with gold and gardens; there is also a great suburb where many Muslims live ... Their religion is Christianity of the Jacobite sect; their bishops are dependent on the Patriarch of Alexandria like the Nuba” (2000:105).

While Alodia at large held to the monophysitic Christian faith Muslims and followers of traditional African religions were tolerated. It seems as if there were indeed substantial numbers of Muslims here in the tenth century.

Sundkler and Steed attribute the downfall of Alodia as starting with the attacks of the Muslim Funj people from the south in the sixteenth century (2000:34). Sheikh Abdulla Gamma apparently attacked and conquered Soba around the year 1500. Not long after this the Funj took control of the territory that previously belonged to Alodia. They also conquered the Abdallab Arabs and extended their empire to the north.

With the destruction of Soba Christians in Alodia lost their spiritual centre. They also couldn't get new bishops from the patriarch in Alexandria. Without a bishop no new priests could be ordained and the result was a slow death of the church. In spite of this general decline it seems as if smaller groups and settlements still continued to follow their Christian traditions and cultures for many years.

4.5 Reasons why Christian Nubia did not survive

Although Christianity in Nubia faded away in the end it is important to remember how long it succeeded in difficult surroundings. Groves writes: “That it should have survived so long in a kingdom ringed round by Muslim peoples and deeply penetrated by Muslim influences is a tribute to the root it had taken in the land” (1948:108). Several reasons can be given why it eventually lost its Christian character.

4.5.1 External reasons

Arab nomads moving from Egypt into Sudan definitely played a major role in weakening Christianity and strengthening Islam. The nomads brought the Muslim faith with them and through intermarriage the Nubians gradually accepted both their faith and culture (Sundkler & Steed 2000:34).

Falk sees the fact that the Nubian Church had no “stimulating influence from other Christians” as one of the major reasons for eventual failure (1979:73). The hostility of the Muslim Mamluks who ruled in Egypt from the middle of the thirteenth century made it difficult for Nubian Christians to retain contact with other Christian communities. Nubia’s isolation especially from Egypt was fatal in terms of church leadership. The rule that only the Coptic Patriarch in Alexandria could ordain bishops for the Nubian church resulted in a Church without ordained leaders. It inevitably led to a weakened Church.

The Muslim Empire that stretched across North Africa had effectively cut off Nubia from the rest of the Christian world. Christian nations to the north and east of Nubia did very little to develop Christian ties with the isolated kingdom. They had their own struggles for survival and projects that took up all their resources.

Pressure to convert to Islam was another reason. When the armies of Sultan Baybars the first Mamluk ruler conquered Dongola in 1276 he instituted the so-called head tax. All Nubians had three choices. They could convert to Islam. They could pay head-tax to redeem themselves. The third possibility was to be killed should somebody refuse the first two options. Many Nubians could not afford the head-tax and therefore nominally converted to Islam. Although the conversions were not heartfelt it still meant a serious decline for the Nubian church (Werner et al 2000:116).

War often has a negative effect on a country that is attacked by invaders even if such attacks are repulsed. The Nubian kingdom was attacked from both the south and the

north and the attackers were mostly Muslims who had no affinity for Christianity. Natural disasters like droughts and floods added to the negative impact made by war. It resulted in the depopulation of parts of Nubia. Since agriculture was central to Nubian life these devastating disasters had a huge impact on Nubian life as a whole. Instability, fear and disaster-related problems affected the church as much as any other part of life (Werner et al: 115-116).

One of the economic lifelines of Nubia was the Nile's use as the major trade route. However, as new trade routes opened up through the desert by using camel caravans, the importance of the Nile for trade purposes decreased significantly. This had a very negative economic effect on the erstwhile rich kingdom.

4.5.2 Internal reasons

Internal problems played just as big a part in the failure of Christianity in Nubia. One of the internal reasons that stopped the church of reaching its full potential was that it was too closely connected with the monarchy. Sundkler and Steed correctly say that "... Nubia's Church history was that of its kings, taking on the aspects of a court religion, while the masses were, perhaps, only superficially incorporated into the Church" (2000:32).

Nubian kings and their officials were positive to the church. Some members of the royal family were even ordained as bishops. Unfortunately the church never opposed the state and consequently never learned to "stand on its own feet" without state support. When the Christian political structures of Nubia therefore started to crumble and Muslim started to rule the Church did not have the power to remain standing on its own.

Dependence on the outside Christian world and especially on the Patriarch in Alexandria prevented the Nubian church from surviving after it was isolated from these sources and people. Apparently they never started an indigenous theological school and they also never initiated a process of choosing and ordaining their own bishops. Although there were a number of Nubian clergy "... they were few, too few" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:34). Without bishops who could only be ordained by the Coptic Patriarch in Alexandria no priests could be ordained. This negative spiral led to a leaderless church in the long run.

Without ordained leaders spiritual death was inevitable. To make things worse church services were not geared to create a strong base of Christian laymen. It even seemed as if the laity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had to stand outside during church services! The predictable result was that they could not continue the Church once there were no ordained priests to lead (Werner et al 2000:117).

The problem of isolation due to the Muslim presence in Egypt was worsened by what Shaw calls "... the spirit of feudalism" (1996:97). This attitude led the Nubian Church to withdraw from more active cooperation with other national churches. Eventually there was a desperate cry for help. It was already too late.

Although most Nubians at a time called themselves Christians there were no serious attempts from the side of the leaders to ground their flocks in the Christian faith. It opened the gates for all kinds of magical practices, superstitions and traditional beliefs to enter the Church. Believers at times sought the protection and power of the archangels and Revelation's four living creatures through magical formulas and incantations. The mingling of Christianity with magic and superstition often deprived the Gospel of its central message and resulted in a fuzzy, weak Christianity.

Another major neglect was that no serious attempts were made to evangelize the unreached parts of Nubia or neighbouring countries. Shaw puts it bluntly: "The first cause of Nubian Christianity's demise was simply lack of evangelism" (1996:97). Although some efforts were made to expand Christianity on Nubia's western side there are no records of evangelistic outreaches to the Arab nomads or the Funj. Both groups embraced Islam and promoted it successfully after infiltrating and invading Nubia.

Evangelism was probably hindered by Nubia's slave trade. They had to deliver several hundred slaves each year to Egypt and obviously raided their neighbours to fill up their quota. Such activities could only lead to suspicion and hatred.

4.6 Conclusion

Although Christianity flourished for nearly a millennium in Nubia it eventually disappeared.

Today the areas that were known as Nubia are predominantly Muslim. Are there any lessons to be learnt from this sad history? For the purpose of this thesis I want to highlight only three.

First, the Church in present-day Sudan must not become dependent on the Church outside of Sudan. Here I think especially on financial dependence that can have negative affects in the long run.

Second, a strong local leadership must be developed. They in turn must develop their congregation members. If this does not happen Christianity may again degenerate into a folk-religion riddled with traditional superstitions and magical practices.

Lastly, any church that does not actively involve itself in mission work will lose its spiritual vigour. In the present Sudan context it is extremely important to realize that evangelism cannot be ignored without serious results for the Church in the future. It is especially true of Muslim evangelism.

CHAPTER 5

THE GOSPEL IN SUDAN: MODERN MISSIONS

5.1 Copts in Sudan

Even before Turkish rule many Copts came from Egypt to Sudan. Since they were educated and trustworthy the Turkish government recruited many of them for administration purposes. At the time when the Mahdi captured Khartoum in 1885 many Copts were killed. The main Coptic Church Al Adra was also destroyed (Werner et al 2000:198).

Mahdist rulers forced everybody to embrace Islam. They remained suspicious about the sincerity of the forced conversions, but since most of them were illiterate they needed the Copts in the administration.

In daytime the Coptic believers lived as if they were Muslims. After sunset they secretly gathered together as the Christians they actually were. Many secret baptisms were conducted and other quick actions helped many Christians to survive. When it became known that the Mahdists planned to distribute all the Coptic girls among them Abuna Philataos (meaning Pastor Philataos) quickly arranged for all of them to be married to Coptic men (Werner et al 2000:199). Pastor Philathaos professed to be a Muslim to save his life, but secretly he worked energetically amongst the Copts to keep their faith alive.

5.2 Roman Catholic Church: The Mission to Central Africa

5.2.1 Annetto Casolani and Maximillian Ryllo

Annetto Casolani was a priest from Malta. He was instrumental in the Roman Catholic Church's missionary interest in Sudan. He became fascinated by this vast country through reading a book "Travels in Kordofan". Ignaz Pallme authored the book and in it described the evils of slavery. Pallme personally witnessed how three and four year old children were sold as slaves (Werner et al 2000:128). This and the fact that Islam and

Black Africa met in Sudan compelled Casolani to propose a missionary activity to Propaganda Fide.

The response was positive and resulted in the establishment of the Mission to Central Africa. Those who approved the Mission's founding had three objectives in mind. They desired "... to bring about conversion of African peoples; to provide spiritual support for Christians residing in the region ... and to encourage the abolition of the slave trade" (Nikkel 2001:64).

There was also another reason for the speed with which the decision was taken. Several Catholic leaders felt anxious about the fact that they were well behind the Protestants in the "mission race". Caution was thrown to the wind and the Vicariate Apostolic of Central Africa was established without the normal stabilizing procedures. Casolani was consecrated as bishop of the new Vicariate.

When Casolani tried to put necessary arrangements in place he was accused of stalling the process because of wrong motives. Rumours had it that he dragged his feet because his actual plan was to become bishop in Malta. In spite of the fact that he was the driving force behind the whole movement, Casolani fell in disfavour. He received a harsh rebuke from his superiors. Deeply hurt Casolani resigned as Pro Vicar, but affirmed that he would still go to Africa as an ordinary priest (Werner et al 2000:131-132).

With Casolani's resignation Father Maximillian Ryllo became the new Pro Vicar. The Jesuit Superior General who was his overseer had questions about his appointment. He described Ryllo as an excellent scholar and a good person. On the dark side he warned that Ryllo had distinct weaknesses in the areas of judgement, administration and the handling of money (Werner et al 2000:132). In spite of all the misgivings he was still appointed.

Ryllo acted with the required speed and went to Khartoum as quickly as possible. His arrival there on 11 February 1848 signified the real "birth day" of the Mission. The Pro Vicar and his fellow missionaries began their work by targeting slavery. This approach led to uneasy relations with the many merchants in Khartoum. Turkish, Egyptian and European traders resented the interference of the missionaries since slavery proved to be

very profitable (Nikkel 2001:65). To add to their discouragement the Mission's first attempt at starting a school with ransomed slave children failed.

Ryllo led the Mission for only four months in Khartoum. Then he died. Casolani also became so sick that he had to return to Europe. Father Angelo Vinco accompanied him. The young mission was in serious trouble. As Casolani left for Europe he must have felt his dreams were fading into oblivion.

5.2.2 Devotion, discouragement and death

Fortunately the situation was not hopeless. Izak Knoblecher was chosen as the Mission's new leader. He was young but very talented man. The new leader also had a loyal and zealous colleague in Angelo Vinco. Although he was only 28 years old Knoblecher took a firm grip on the Mission. He wrote to the Austrian Consul-General in Alexandria asking him for protection and financial support. The little help he received would have discouraged many others in his position. Knoblecher however was a man with a vision and he would not give up (Werner et al 2000:135).

In 1849 he initiated the exploration of possible work outside of Khartoum. Together with his colleagues Vinco and Pedemonte he undertook an exploratory trip down the river Nile. They had no funds and decided to trade for ivory in order to pay for the hire of the boat. Vinco and his friends made very brief contact with some Nuer, especially with chief Kan. Chief Kan invited them to come back to his area, but without the Turks who manned the hired boat.

The mission party then went further south and made contact with the Bari in the area of Chief Jubek. A certain Nyigilo instantly befriended the missionaries. Suddenly the people turned hostile. At first the missionaries could not understand the sudden change in attitude but eventually the truth came out. Bad rumours were spread on order from the Governor General in Khartoum. The Pasha did not want any mission activities to be established in Southern Sudan. When Knoblecher discovered the plot he resolved to "settle the question of the freedom and independence of the Mission from our sworn enemies the Turks" (quoted by Nikkel 2001:71).

In 1850 he went to Europe where he recruited five new priests and received moral support from Franz Josef. As a result a new Society, the Society of Mary, was launched. Members pledged prayer and financial support. Knoblecher's enthusiasm was such that he convinced Pope Leo XII who had decided to dissolve the Vicariate of Central Africa to reverse his decision. The Vicariate was given another chance and Knoblecher became the new Pro Vicar of the Mission (Werner et al 2000:139-140).

Knoblecher bought a ship in Egypt and called her *Stella Matutina*. His return to Khartoum was celebrated with fireworks and he was hailed as "a symbol of the coming enlightenment of its inhabitants" (Nikkel 2001:66).

Father Vinco had not forgotten the first contact the missionaries had made with the Bari. When his chance came in 1851 he returned there and opened the Bari Mission at Gondokoro. Vinco was the right man for the work. He spoke out fearlessly in front of Jubek the rainmaker-chief that it was God and not man who created everything and brought rain. If people wanted rain they had to turn to the living God and stop their evil deeds. Vinco also intervened and averted a sure war in the area. This won him the respect of everybody (Werner et al 2000:142-3).

Just when the mission station started to flourish Vinco became very ill. On 22 January 1853 he died. The pioneer missionary was so popular with the Bari that they mourned and made songs about him for at least six years after his death. It was a clear sign of the appreciation the Bari had for him. Anderson wrote the following true statement in reflecting on Vinco's life: "... we see that there is more to living than accomplishment. Vinco lived a short time with the Bari of Gondokoro but was still remembered a hundred years after his death" (2000:207).

Other priests were sent by the Mission to Gondokoro. One of them was Father Mozgan. He felt more drawn to the Dinka tribe and moved to start Holy Cross mission station in 1854. Although Mozgan and his colleagues intended to build good relationships with the Dinka people they found them strange and lazy. From their side the Dinka could not understand the way the missionaries behaved. When Mozgan for instance slaughtered a calf for food the Dinka were horrified. Cattle were only slaughtered for very special occasions and for sacrifices (Werner et al 2000:145).

Mozgan and his team struggled to make connections between Dinka life and Christianity (i.e. sacrifices and knowledge of God). In spite of the many difficulties the work continued. Father Lanz for instance initiated the building of a large thatched church building. He also led translation work in Dinka (Nikkel 2001:74-75).

Discouragement at times came in the form of death and war. A number of missionaries died in quick succession at Holy Cross. Knoblecher did not give any attention to the health of his people. The resulting deaths led to a decline in support from Austria (Werner et al 2000:147). Violence broke out between the Turks and the Bari. The missionaries at Gondokoro were directly affected. Relationships became so strained that Knoblecher closed down Gondokoro in 1854. The station reopened for a short time in 1855 but the relations with Bari were still very strained and work couldn't continue with any real success.

Knoblecher realized he needed to strengthen the dwindling support of the Mission in Austria. He started a journey home but fell sick and on 13 April 1858 he died in Naples (Sundkler & Steed 2000:139). Although the Mission was at a low point by the time of his death Knoblecher's vision, organizing ability, scholarship and optimism won him the respect of Arabs and Southern Sudanese alike.

On his way to Austria Knoblecher met with Father Beltrame Kirchner who had been in Gondokoro in 1854. Knoblecher appointed him as leader of the Verona Fathers and told him to stay at Holy Cross while studying the language and customs of the local people. He also had to select the site for a new mission station (Nikkel 2001:74).

The new mission team had a discouraging first experience of missionary work in Southern Sudan. On their arrival they found Father Mozgan dead at Holy Cross. They moved to Gondokoro only to hear that Ueberbacher had also passed away. They then returned to Holy Cross to the news that another missionary Oliboni was dying. Daniele Comboni was a member of the new team. He was deeply touched by the words of the dying man who said: "Go on with the work you have begun, and if it should happen that only one of you be left, let him not lose confidence or withdraw" (quoted by Nikkel 2001:75).

After all that he had seen Kirchner took the health of his people much more seriously when he became Pro Vicar May 1859. He decided to withdraw all missionaries to Shellal in Egypt in the rainy season and allows them only to work in Sudan during the dry season. This was not a very popular decision. Some missionaries decided to go back home and in the end Kirchner was left with only five priests (Werner et al 2000:149-150).

The Pro Vicar went to Europe where he stated that the Mission could only survive if it was placed under a large society. Personally Kirchner favoured the Franciscans. With his resignation the Mission was indeed placed under Franciscans and Father Reinthaler became the new Pro Vicar. Reinthaler made a strong attempt to revive Mission. He sent a strong mission force to the country, which has already killed so many devoted men. In 1862 fifty-two missionaries had reached Sudan and a new mission station was opened in the Shilluk kingdom. Unfortunately it failed. In spite of all their zeal the missionaries had no answer for the deadly diseases of Southern Sudan. Between January and April 1862 twenty-two missionaries paid the highest price for serving their Lord in Sudan (Sundkler & Steed 2000:141).

To make matters worse simmering tension between German and Italian missionaries erupted into fierce conflict at Shellal. The German missionaries left Sudan.

Father Pfeiffer took over after Reinthaler's death. He decided to keep only Khartoum station open and released all missionaries of their vows. Even in Khartoum matters came to the worse for the Mission. They had accepted runaway slaves thereby creating many problems and friction. The final blow came when the Austrian Consul in Khartoum asked for Pfeiffer's transferral. For all practical reasons the Mission was dead.

5.2.3 Reasons for the Mission's failures

There were different reasons why the Mission had failed. Health problems and death brought discouragement both in the mission field and among supporters. No mission can withstand the terrible death toll of so many of its members without being deeply affected.

Violence in Southern Sudan mainly due to the deeply rooted slave trade created an atmosphere that made many of the mission projects very difficult to maintain. According

to Anderson the “whole system of slavery ... was deeply embedded in the Sudanese society and economy. There were no place for free Christian artisans. Education, seemingly one of the achievements of the Mission, could not actually be successful at all, either educationally or spiritually, whilst slavery was so deep-rooted. With no roots or home, the young men drifted into crime and most, eventually became Muslims” (2000:153-4).

Furthermore the missionaries’ inability to grasp the African realities and life contributed to the failure. Anderson remarks: “The missionaries were very traditional Catholic Christians who understood little of the cultural clothing of the Gospel that they preached. They believed that the whole tradition, as they had received it, needed to be brought to Central Africa (2000:152).

While acknowledging the failures it would be unfair not to mention the positive contributions of these devoted men. Apart from pioneering the work in the South of Sudan, a very difficult and admirable task, they also developed the first dictionary and grammar of Dinka. These books were published in 1866. Dr Mitterrutzner and others also compiled the first Bari dictionary and Grammar that was published in 1867.

Lastly there were the words of the dying Oliboni that ripened in the heart of the young Daniele Comboni. Eventually it would play a major role in bringing him back to Sudan where he started a permanent work.

5.2.4 Daniele Comboni

Daniele Comboni was 27years old when he first visited the Holy Cross Mission Station. One cannot imagine a more traumatic introduction to the hardships of Southern Sudan than what he and his colleagues had experienced. Several leaders were dead or dying within a short time after their arrival. The missionaries did not die complaining or regretting their being in Sudan. The dying words of Father Oliboni made a strong impression on the young Comboni. He said: “*God wills the conversion of Africa*, of this I die assured. Swear to me that you will not turn back” (quoted by Werner et al 2000:154).

Bad health however forced Comboni to return to Italy in 1859. After a slow recovery he started to work at the Mazza Institute in Verona (Italy). There he became Vice-Rector in charge of Africans who came for training. A pivotal point in Comboni's life was when Don Nicola Mazza sent him to bring seven ransomed slave boys to Verona through Egypt. His visit to Africa in a leadership position revived Comboni's interest in the continent.

Africa became the focus of his attention and he was inspired to draw up a plan for the renewal of Africa while visiting Rome in 1864. He called his plan the Plan for the Regeneration of Africa. In his understanding sin has penetrated every aspect of life leading to utter degeneration of the world. The people of Africa just like all other inhabitants of the earth had to be liberated from sin in all its forms. This included liberation from social evils like slavery, hunger, disease and social marginalization.

Comboni did not think that Africans were worse than for instance Europeans simply because of the colour of their skins. In his mind "... the deviations which he denounces in Africa are not attributable to the black race as such, but to the consequences of original sin (degeneration) which has not yet been removed by God's intervention through the missionary activity" (Pierli 1998:42).

Comboni built his plan on six pillars. First, the local people's capability to take control of their own religious history and social environment had to be trusted. Missionaries had to work from the perspective of showing a deep esteem for the worth of all men. Second, Africa had to be saved through Africans. They had to be involved in the regeneration of all the spheres of life. This was only possible when people were first liberated from the power of original sin. Third, missionaries had to "make common cause with the people". In this he set the example as was seen with his inauguration speech in Khartoum in 1873. He told the audience: "Day and night, sun and rain will find me equally ready to help your spiritual needs. Your good shall be mine, and your sufferings shall be mine too" (quoted by Pierli 1998:45).

The fourth pillar was evangelism. This essential task of the Church had to be undertaken as a community. Comboni experienced that isolated evangelisers had to face severe physical hardship and moral temptations that they could often not handle alone. He was therefore a strong advocate for apostolic communities that could be so much more

effective as a group. Fifth, local churches also had to cooperate with other local churches and with agents sent by sister churches abroad. He wisely asked: “Would the conquest of the tribes of unhappy Africa not be better effected by setting our centre of operation in a place where Africans can live without changing and Europeans can live without succumbing?” (Quoted by Pierli 1998:45-46). Lastly missionaries had to set a goal of promoting both faith and civilisation.

One way of achieving his goals was to establish large institutions for religious and secular training of Africans in North Africa and close to East and West coasts of Africa (Sundkler & Steed 2000:142). European missionaries also had to go to the centres for acclimatization before going to their mission posts.

When Comboni proposes his Plan to Pope Pius IX he accepted cautiously but left the work to Comboni of persuading the key people in the Society of Propagation of the Faith based in Paris. He also had to convince the bishops in charge of mission areas. Comboni received mixed reactions but in the end his Plan was accepted.

Sudan through the gateway of Cairo became the centre of Comboni’s missionary focus. He started three Institutes in 1867 in Cairo. One was for girls, one for boys and one for missionaries. He also started a support society called the Institute of the Good Shepherd for the Regeneration of Africa. At the first Vatican Council in 1870 he argued the case of making Africa an important “Agenda point” for the Church before hundreds of important church leaders (Werner et al 2000:164).

In 1872 Comboni became the Pro Vicar of the Vicariate of Central Africa. The next year he returned to Khartoum with 30 missionaries. From the Sudanese capital city he prepared to re-establish the Mission in Sudan in stages. Missionaries and Sudanese were prepared in Cairo. A small team was sent to al Obeid to investigate mission possibilities. There they acquired a piece of land and started a church and school. Comboni’s plan was to move to the Nuba Mountains and to the South of Sudan via al Obeid. An agricultural settlement was established at Malbes about 18km from al Obeid. Christian families were settled there where they received training in agricultural skills. At the centre they were also guarded against Islamic influence. By 1881 thirty families were settled at Malbes (Werner et al 2000:177).

In the Nuba Mountains a mission station was opened at Dilling. Sadly the missionaries at Dilling were expelled for some time due to “revenge tactics” of slave traders (Sundkler & Steed 2000:143).

One big weakness in the Comboni’s mission methodology was that the Plan of Africa’s regeneration was his plan. Those working under him didn’t want or wasn’t allowed to take important decisions. It hindered a lot of the work to progress since Comboni was often away in Europe to secure funds.

Comboni’s weaknesses do not place in doubt the spirituality of the man. The Pro Vicar was absolutely dependent on and committed to God. He knew the Mission could not survive without obedience to Christ. He wrote “A mission as arduous and as difficult as ours cannot survive with a superficial holiness, which is just a matter of putting on airs. Our candidates must be alight with a love which has its source in God and in the love of Christ” (quoted by Pierli 1998:51).

His vision of saving Africa through Africans was not always easy to achieve. Yet there are clear instances where he invested in and worked with African Christian leaders. Many Africans were trained as catechists, farmers, teachers and technicians in Europe and especially in his Institutes in Cairo.

Comboni unlike others of his time was not convinced of the wisdom of sending promising Africans to Europe. Whereas many well-intentioned Catholics was of the opinion that young African believers could learn best in the context of the civilised world Comboni disagreed. He wrote that:”... by the time they return to Africa, they have become unsuitable for the continent because of the European habits which have become almost second nature to them, habits which become repugnant and harmful in the conditions of African life.” (Quoted by Nikkel 2001:87).

Bishop Comboni had special relationships with a number of promising church leaders. Father Joseph Pius Hadrian was an African priest with great potential in the eyes of Comboni. Unfortunately he died after only two months of ministry with the Pro Vicar. Anthony Dubale was a ransomed slave whom Comboni took to Verona in 1861. After his training in Italy Dubale joined Comboni and worked at Malbes (Werner et al 2000:180).

Comboni who had him trained took in Daniel Surur Farim Deng a runaway slave from Abyei. After training and work in Suakin, Egypt, he worked with Sudanese refugees at Helwan and Gezira close to Cairo. His death at a young age was a blow to his spiritual father.

Catarina Zenab proved to be a great help to the Comboni's missionaries. She grew up close to Holy Cross. When her potential was uncovered she was sent for further training in Egypt and Italy. Zenab did her best work among Sudanese refugees in Cairo and with Dinkas in Khartoum. She was both pastor and evangelist to them. Sadly her relationship with the Mission broke down in later years (Nikkel 2001:88-89).

The year 1876 was a low point in Comboni's career. Many accusations were brought against him especially in the area of mismanagement. Later that year his name was completely cleared. Trust in him was such that he was consecrated as bishop in 1877.

Comboni's first two years as bishop was very difficult. Severe drought, famine and cholera caused immense suffering to the local population and to the missionaries. When rains eventually came it resulted in floods. Waterborne diseases caused the deaths of many missionaries. Sundkler quotes Comboni where he described the results of the famine: "I myself witnessed the extreme poverty of very many locations where whole villages reduced by famine lived on grass, wild seeds and even on the dung of animals" (2000:143).

As if Comboni and his missionaries had not enough challenges they suffered a financial blow as well. The Mission lost a lot of money when a British merchant who had kept their money went bankrupt. Comboni went to Europe for a year and a half to secure funds.

On his return he decided to visit al Obeid, Malbes and Dilling. At one point he was drenched in a rainstorm causing him to become sick. Being Comboni he continued his work in spite of his sickness. He baptized new believers and put in an effort to visit sick and dying missionaries. His body could take only so much and on 10 Oct 1881 he died.

His life's work is evaluated in very different ways. Some saw it as a failure while others hailed it as a great success. Pierli for instance writes: "Comboni should not be left to the

past and forgotten; like all the true apostles who have sprung up since Jesus' great commission on Ascension day, he has been endowed with ... the dynamic power of the One who was risen from the dead" (1998:28). Whatever the truth may be Comboni left a permanent mark on the mission history of Sudan.

5.2.5 The Mahdi and his effect on mission

On 29 June 1881 Muhammad Ahmad declared himself to be the promised Mahdi. He wrote to key people in Sudan that he was "... the divine leader chosen by God at the end of time to fill the earth with justice and equity, even as it had been filled with oppression and wrong" (Holt & Daly 1988:86). His motives for initiating a revolt might have been his desire to reform Islam and purge it from all faults and impurities.

Ra'uf Pasha the Governor General of Sudan tried to negotiate but failed. He then sent soldiers to quell the uprising. The soldiers were armed with guns yet the Mahdi's forces that only had spears and clubs wiped them out. Another bigger group of soldiers were also ambushed and annihilated. After that 4000 soldiers were sent on a punitive expedition. Even they were completely wiped out in a surprise attack. Many Muslims then joined the Mahdi's movement.

During their advance on al Obeid the army of the Mahdi captured and imprisoned eight missionaries at Dilling on 13 September 1882. The missionaries were about to be executed since they refused to embrace Islam but were saved from death at the last moment through the intervention of the Mahdi himself (Werner et al 2000:190). They were forced to stay in the Mahdi's camp taking care of their own needs. Three died shortly afterwards due to sickness (Groves 1964:170-171).

In January 1883 al Obeid surrendered to the Mahdi. He led the prayers in the mosque to thank Allah for the significant victory (Holt & Daly 1988:91). Seven missionaries five of them nuns joined those already in the Mahdi's camp. The Khalifa Abdullahi tried persuading the missionaries to convert to Islam but they all refused. This led to harassment and even torture until the Mahdi again personally intervened.

Due to the Mahdi's control of the area, all three Catholic mission stations in Kordofan ceased to function. Father Ohrwalder and Father Bonomi were taken to al Obeid while the other missionaries were taken with the Mahdi's forces toward Khartoum. Father Ohrwalder had the opportunity to discuss religion with the Mahdi but without making any real impression (Werner et al 2000:192).

A British-led force tried to recapture al Obeid but was soundly defeated. The Mahdi's forces were greatly encouraged by their series of victories and started advancing to Khartoum. Missionaries and pupils from the mission schools fled to Shellal and Cairo on foot. Only Brother Domenici Polinari volunteered to remain behind.

In Feb 1884 Charles Gordon went to Khartoum in an effort to save the situation. It was too little too late. The Mahdi's forces took Khartoum on 26 Jan 1885 and Gordon was speared to death. Two days later the relieving force arrived on steamers. They could do nothing except to return home (Holt & Daly 1988:95).

Gordon's death had a strong impact on the British public. They saw him as a martyr and in later years this would surface in mission endeavours. "Gordon Sunday" the Sunday closest to his death became the largest celebration in colonial Sudan apart from Christmas (Werner et al 2000:195).

In June 1885 the Mahdi died of typhus and Khalifa Abdullahi became the first Khalifa of the Mahdi. The Khalifa was the title of the Mahdi's successor. With the Turkish oppressors destroyed the vision of Islam was the strongest factor that kept the movement going. A certain Karamallah went south to establish Mahdist rule. He forcibly tried to convert Southerners to Islam. When they refused many of their tribal leaders were beheaded. Fierce fighting broke out especially on the side of the Dinka in Bahr al Ghazal. When Karamallah was recalled he left behind bitter memories in the minds of these Southern inhabitants. Strangely the Mahdi was still venerated as a divinity by many Dinka (Nikkel 2001:59).

In the Shilluk kingdom the king professed faith in Allah. His convictions were probably forced on him and at a later stage he apostatized. When the Mahdists discovered the king's apostasy they murdered him. It resulted in fierce battles between the Shilluk and

Mahdists. Experiences like the above left negative impressions concerning Islam in the minds of many Southerners.

After the Mahdi's forces had captured Khartoum the Catholic missionaries who were still prisoners were allowed to settle in Omdurman. They had to find work in order to survive. Among other things they made soap and purses. During the drought of 1889 they struggled to survive due to scarcity of food. Several of them died (Werner et al 2000:200).

5.2.6 Francesco Sogaro: New leader of the Mission

At the very difficult time when the Mahdi grew in power and influence Propaganda Fide asked Father Francesco Sogaro to take up the task of leading the Catholic missionary enterprise in Sudan. Sogaro himself was not a missionary. Yet he did a commendable task of keeping the Mission from completely falling apart. Perceiving that the Mahdi might capture Khartoum he ordered all missionaries out of Sudan. After the Mahdi had indeed took control of the capital city Sogaro did his utmost to rescue the captured missionaries.

The first person he helped in escaping was Father Bonomi in 1885. The next year two sisters Maria Caprini and Fortunata Quasie as well as a certain Venturini were assisted (Groves 1964:171). Many years later in 1891 Father Ohrwalder and three remaining nuns were also helped to escape.

Sogaro developed the Mission in these very trying times so that it eventually became a full missionary order. It was called the Verona Fathers. Although popularly known as the Verona Fathers the Mission's actual name was Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Mostly due to jealousy and church politics Sogario was dismissed in 1894

5.2.7 Antonio Roveggio: the first Verona Father to lead the Mission

Antonio Roveggio was consecrated bishop in 1895 and established Aswan as the Mission's headquarters. When it became clear that Britain and Egypt would re-conquer Sudan he pro-actively purchased an iron steamboat on which missionaries could move south on Sudan's many rivers to establish new stations. The boat was called "Redemptor".

In September 1898 the expected battle for Khartoum took place. The army of Lord Kitchener soundly defeated the Mahdi army. About 11,000 Mahdi fighters died in the battle close to Khartoum. This battle "... marked the end of the Mahdist state in the Sudan" (Holt & Daly 1988:112).

After the Anglo-Egyptian victory over the Mahdists, Roveggio immediately wanted to resume the work of his predecessors. Lord Cromer in Egypt and Kitchener who had become the Governor-General in Sudan were not favourable towards mission work (Werner et al 2000:215). They feared that an attempt to convert Muslims to Christianity might spark a fresh rebellion.

Kitchener preferred English missionaries above Italians if he had to tolerate any missionaries at all. Roveggio however persuaded the Pope and Propaganda Fide not to give the work to the British Mill Hill Fathers as requested by Kitchener. In September 1899 two Verona Fathers were sent to Khartoum. They found the old Mission buildings in ruins and their land being confiscated by the government. The compensation and new land did little to comfort them.

Any mission work in North Sudan north of the 10 degrees line was forbidden. In 1898 Kitchener told a CMS mission deputation "... the Muslim north was closed territory but the pagan south above Fashoda open to mission entry" (Groves 1964:255).

Roveggio in any case had his eyes on the south and on 11 February 1901 the first Verona Fathers Mission station was opened at Lul. Lul lay within the Shilluk kingdom. Although the first contact seemed positive the Shilluk quickly revealed a hostile attitude. A fire destroyed most of the mission buildings and arson was suspected as being the cause. When the reigning Shilluk king called the *Reth* was replaced his successor showed much more openness to the missionaries and relations improved (Werner et al 2000:217).

Roveggio wanted to restart the work at Gondokoro, but the British authorities on the grounds of insecurity blocked him. At this time he was not well and wanted to return to Italy. He died on the way on 2 May 1902. Franz Geyer succeeded him as leader of the Verona Fathers in Sudan.

5.2.8 Sphere System and Franz Geyer as new leader of the Verona Fathers

Geyer was a German priest. He was chosen Vicar in September 1903 and consecrated as bishop in November. The new bishop was an excellent linguist also with ample missionary experience. At this time Reginald Wingate became the new Governor-General of Sudan. He worked out the so-called Sphere System where each denomination was given a specific area in Southern Sudan where they could work. The areas would not overlap in order to stop unnecessary friction and rivalry between mission organisations (Werner et al 2000:219).

The RCC received the western side of the White Nile where they could continue missionary work. Bishop Geyer and the RCC at large did not accept the arrangement of spheres easily. Nevertheless they started work in Bahr al Ghazal.

While travelling to Bahr al Ghazal, Geyer decided to open a new station at Tonga among the Shilluk. He then continued to visit the town of Wau. Geyer thought the town was too cosmopolitan in character and that the large concentration of Muslims might make effective missionary work very difficult (Sundkler & Steed 2000:148).

After touring the area he decided to rather start work at Kayango and Mbili. The work at Kayango was opened in March 1904 "... amidst a salvo of rifle shots and joyous shouts from the population" (Majok 1984:230). Initial enthusiasm was dampened by the sudden death of six missionaries in the first two years. It shook Geyer but Wingate encouraged him. The Governor-General told the discouraged bishop that the sacrifices would not be in vain and that he had to persevere.

Work had to be started from nothing and the missionaries' first task was to get acquainted with the people and their customs. It was no easy task. Western Bahr al Ghazal at that time was home to many different small tribes like the Golo, Ndogo, Bai, Kresh and Sere. Together they were called Fertit. The much stronger Zande tribe and merchants who traded in ivory and slaves displaced these small tribes. They found some security in staying together.

The missionaries tried to befriend Kayango's inhabitants and started to teach the willing ones how to read. Their education program eventually led to the opening of a basic catechism class and a school (Werner et al 2000:221). Vignato, the missionary supervisor, kept his team focused on the task of befriendng the locals. He used their love of celebration as a contact point. During Christian feasts he would invite all people to join in the celebrations. He also joined their feasts. Less than three years after the missionaries' arrival the first converts were baptized. The new converts consisted of six boys and two married men (Majok 1984:232).

At Mbili the local reception was less friendly. After less than two years one of the missionaries died and the other one Father Tappi was too sick to continue the work. The station was closed for two years. In 1908 it was reopened in a healthier place. At first some boys attended the catechist classes on a very irregular basis. However the work really took off when the hired cooks brought friends to stay and eat with them. These unexpected and somewhat unwelcome guests gave the missionaries the opportunity they waited for. They started a boarding school and invited the "guests" to attend. The classes in the end became quite popular (Werner et al 2000:222).

From the main Mission the work spread to surrounding villages and by 1912 nine villages had a catechumenate each. In December 1913 the first converts were baptized at Mbili.

5.2.9 Wau and Mboro

Bishop Geyer started work here at the urging of the governor in Wau and of Wingate. The missionaries ran an Industrial school with workshop and established a primary school. Exploring further mission possibilities Geyer visited the Zande Empire. He could not start a work there since the area was allocated to Anglican missionaries (Sundkler & Steed 2000:149). Geyer then made a creative plan of getting the Zande to come to his sphere. He persuaded some of the princes to send their sons to the school in Wau. The first "royal Zande boy" came in 1907, but by 1911 there were already 18 princes in the boarding school. Apart from these royal pupils the students were "... invariably the outcasts and misfits of the southern Sudanese societies – orphans, refugees and disowned" (Collins quoted by Majok 1984:234).

Wau eventually became the Mission's headquarters in Bahr al Ghazal. Local hostility continued to hinder progress especially since the chosen method for missionary expansion was education. Majok points out that local chiefs "... considered the sending of boys to missionary schools a kind of human tax" (1984:236). For this reason they only sent boys they saw as expendable or useless.

A certain Eduardo Mason proved the power of good relationships. He continued to promote mission through education. At the same time he developed friendship with many chiefs encouraging them to send their children to the mission schools. In 1947 Mason became Bishop of Wau and during his time there enjoyed great popularity. When he had decided to build a cathedral in Wau his decision enjoyed the full support of the Dinka residents Christian and non-Christian alike (Werner et al 2000:342).

Although many Dinka accepted Christianity they refused to let go of certain cultural practices. At the top of the list was polygamy. Many older Dinkas also felt that Christianity was the religion of school children and would therefore not accept it.

Father Angelo Arpe wanted to focus on the Ndogo tribe and received permission to start a mission at Mboro in 1912. It closed for some time due to lack of staff. At the urging of Chief Mboro the missionaries reopen it. The Church grew very quickly from 1918 onwards among the Ndogo.

5.2.10 New RCC mission stations

The Zande monarch King Rikita had sent his son to the school in Wau. When Father Berthola visited King Rikita and Chief Tombura he was warmly welcomed. He then started a mission in their area under the supervision of Tombura's brother Mupoi. Mupoi became the name of the new station.

The local believers fondly called Father Firisin one of the missionaries working at Mupoi God's Messenger. His simplicity and humility made him well loved. Firisin's work of planting schools and churches in many villages was also remembered long after his death (Werner et al 2000:291-2).

Since the Zande people were so responsive to the work a second station was opened at Yubu in 1923. Father Giorgetti allowed the Zande culture to deeply influence his missionary work in this place. He took special interest in the local music. When he found the songs of the *kujur* or witch doctors to be of the most powerful, he incorporated it in the mass. He also learned about, and even practiced, certain magic oracles (Werner et al 2000:292). Exactly how Giorgetti reconciled the traditional religious practices with Christianity is not clear. Today many evangelical Sudanese church leaders disagree with his mission methodology.

Raffili was the halfway stop between Mupoi and Wau. The Mission opened a station there, but moved it at a later stage for health reasons.

Mission work was started work at Gondokoro but had to be abandoned due to strained relationships. In 1912 RCC missionaries returned to resume their ministry. The station was moved to Rejaf in 1919, which was healthier. Rejaf was also in the centre of the Bari tribe. The work at Dilling was resumed, but it had to be abandoned in 1916.

5.2.11 Effect of the First World War on Catholic mission work in Sudan

Catholic missionaries working in Sudan were from Germany, Austria and Italy. An Anglo-Egyptian Condominium governed the country with most of the power in British hands. When the First World War broke out relations between the missionaries and government officials became strained. In 1916 German and Austrian missionaries were ordered to leave Sudan. They were told to either go home or to go and stay near Alexandria in Egypt (Werner et al 2000:227).

Bishop Geyer and a few assistants were allowed to stay in Khartoum because of his good relationship with Wingate. The expelled missionaries were allowed to return in 1919 but Geyer's spirit for mission work in Sudan was broken. He resigned in 1922.

The Verona Fathers did not escape the dividing power of race. In 1923 the Mission divided into a German-Austrian and an Italian branch due to long-standing bitterness between these two groups. Most of the Germans and Austrians left Sudan.

5.2.12 Emphasis on education and its impact on RCC mission work

5.2.12.1 Deim Zubeir

In the 1920's and 1930's education was the buzzword in colonial Africa. It affected missionaries and Southern Sudan where they were active. In 1922 the Sudan government decided to leave the education of Southern Sudan in the hands of the different mission organisations (Werner et al 2000:270). While most of the Protestant missions were cautious about linking too closely with the government Catholic missionaries saw this act of the government as their God-given duty.

With the conclusion of the First World War the Verona Fathers wanted to focus their work in Bahr al Ghazal on the communities around Wau. A new station was therefore opened at Deim Zubeir in 1926. A Sudanese catechist, Baptist Mufighi, did the groundwork for this station. He later became one of the best-known Catholic catechists in the region and eventually died a martyr's death in 1964 (Pierli 1998:218-219). More detail on his life will be given in chapter 6.

5.2.12.2 Kwajok, Nyamlel and Abyei

A local Dinka leader Arianhdit in Bahr al Ghazal revolted against the foreign rulers in his area. The revolt was suppressed in 1922. British authorities then approached the Verona Fathers with the request to expand their work in Wau in a northern direction. As a result a new mission station was opened in 1923 at Kwajok.

Werner et al quoted one of the first missionaries Olivetti who said the following after he and his friends had planted a cross on top of Kwajok's hill: "The cross of God which already extends its arms on this beautiful hill of Kwajok, will see numerous Dinkas gathered at its foot" (2000:295).

A school was opened. At first the Rek Dinka in the area did not view the school in a positive light, but the efforts of the Verona Fathers paid off. They worked hard at building good relationships and in the end local chiefs supported the work at the mission station. Small village schools started to spread as well. Christmas celebrations at Kwajok led to the writing and singing of indigenous Christian hymns. This was encouraged by the

missionaries and later became an important part of Church life among Southern Sudanese.

In 1933 another large missionary centre was opened among the Malual Dinka. At first the local population didn't receive the missionaries well. However attitudes changed after the death of Chief Majak Akot. He was killed after insulting the missionaries in a drunken rage. The local population saw his death as a result of his disrespect for the missionaries and subsequently became more open to the mission's activities. They allowed their children to go to the mission school. More schools were planted even as far north as Abyei (Werner et al 2000:298299).

The work in Abyei actually started on a negative note but Father Arthur Nebel succeeded in swaying the opinion of important leaders. In 1948 two churches were built with the blessing of Chief Deng Majok. His own son Francis Deng became the first Abyei graduate from the prestigious secondary school in Rumbek (Werner et al 2000:342-343).

5.2.13 Eastern-Equatoria

Bishop Stoppani was the directors of Catholic mission work in Eastern Equatoria and Uganda. He worked energetically and in 1917 a new mission station was opened at Loa. A certain Baj Guiseppe spent many years there. His love for the local Madi tribe earned him the nickname *Mundu koba*. This name meant that "They are not oppressors, but just ordinary people like us" (Werner et al 2000:278). Baj Guiseppe's example again showed how one person could open up or blocks the way for those following after him in a specific area.

In 1920 work was also initiated in Torit. The missionaries focused on the town people and the Lotuka people around it. A large primary school as well as a technical school was opened. Torit eventually became one of the most important Catholic centres in Sudan.

The next Eastern Equatorian mission station to be opened was in 1934 at Nalingaro. The pioneer Siso Mazzoldi and his colleagues targeted three tribes namely the Didinga, Toposa and Boya. Within two years 22 local believers were trained as catechists and then sent out to open rural chapels in outlying villages. Mazzoldi worked hard at establishing

good relationships with the local people on all levels. He was indeed well-loved and the result was that he could successfully mediate in tense situations like tribal clashes. After a particular tense but successful mediation session between the Boya and Toposa tribes, the Boya put up a chapel at Naoyapak (Werner et al 2000:279).

Catholic mission work expanded to the Bahr al Jebel or White Nile Valley where the zeal of Giuseppe Zambonardi constrained him to incessantly visit people all over the diocese. His tears when seeing many Madi men who professed to be Christians reverting to polygamy was remembered for a long time.

Juba was the administrative capital of the region. It “belonged” to the CMS according to the Spheres System. However Zambonardi succeeded in getting permission to establish a missionary administrative centre there in 1931. He was given clear instructions only to work with Catholics in the town, but his zeal drove him to ignore the instructions. It made him unpopular with the authorities.

Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935. Two years later they expelled all Protestant missionaries from that country. British authorities in Sudan reacted strongly. They sent a message to the Vatican to withdraw Zambonardi who by that time was a bishop and ordered that the Mill Hill Fathers replace the Verona Fathers. The latter group consisted of Dutch and English Catholics (Werner et al 2000:280-281).

5.2.14 Catholic mission work in Upper Nile

Two new stations were opened by the Verona Fathers namely at Detwok in 1923 and at Yoinyang in 1925. However work in this part of Sudan did not proceed well. To make matters worse British-Italian relationships in Sudan deteriorated due to Italy's invasion of neighbouring Ethiopia and their expulsion of Protestant missionaries. Italian missionaries in the areas of Sudan that bordered Ethiopia were compelled to withdraw and in Upper Nile the Mill Hill Fathers replaced the Verona Fathers with their Dutch and English members. The Mill Hill Fathers faced the same struggles of their predecessors, but they did succeed in getting more local believers to accept the vows of Catholic priesthood.

5.2.15 Training of Sudanese Catholic leaders

“The creation of a mass people’s Church in Sudan has ... been the work of a large force of lay evangelists, working in countless rural communities, often with little direction, and even less recognition” (Wheeler1998: 62).

The need for a trained Sudanese leadership became all the more apparent given the fact that lay evangelists had played such an important role from the very beginning. Over the years three minor seminaries were established at Okaru, Bussere and at Porkele. The Vicariate of Rumbek established the latter in 1958.

Although the minor seminaries laid a good foundation for prospecting priests the opening of a major seminary inside Sudan became a necessity. In 1956 such a major seminary called St Pauls Major Seminary was established at Tore River. When civil war broke out St Pauls was transferred to Kit not far from Juba. However as violence escalated most of the seminarians fled to Uganda.

5.3 Protestant missions in Sudan

5.3.1 Early stages

In late 1860’s the Pilgrim Mission of Basel came to Khartoum but soon moved out again. Mission interest in Sudan increased dramatically with the death of Gordon in 1885. It was especially true in Great Britain. CMS founded the Gordon Memorial Sudan Mission in the same year during an emotional meeting in London (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:52). Active mission work however could not start until Kitchener defeated the Mahdists in 1898.

5.3.2 CMS

5.3.2.1 CMS-work in the North

Reverend Llewellyn Gwynne pioneered CMS missionary work in Sudan. Gwynne’s first application to come to Sudan as a missionary failed because the British authorities in Sudan did not want to upset the Muslims in the North. They believed Christian

missionaries trying to evangelize Muslims would be a real danger to the fragile political situation. Near the end of 1899 Gwynne was finally allowed to settle in Omdurman together with Doctor Harpur.

Governor-General Wingate was anxious for Anglican missionaries to start a ministry in Southern Sudan. He constantly pressurized Gwynne on this matter. CMS-leaders however wanted the organisation to work in the North. They stubbornly refused Gwynne permission to start a work in the South. Gwynne was "... trapped in Khartoum – prevented by CMS from going to the South, prevented by the Condomonium authorities from engaging in missionary work in the North" (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:53).

Since so many restrictions were placed on him Gwynne became a chaplain for the British soldiers and other officials in Khartoum. He poured his heart into this work but always retained his interest in missionary work in the South (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:54). Doctor Harpur was also allowed to provide social services. He started a medical ministry. Mission schools for girls were opened in Khartoum, Omdurman, Atbara and Medani between 1902 and 1912.

5.3.2.2 First CMS-work in Southern Sudan

After realizing they would not be allowed to work in the North CMS-leaders finally agreed that work could be started in Southern Sudan. In 1905 a team of six CMS-missionaries moved to a site nine miles south of Bor to establish the first CMS mission station among the Bor Dinka. On 30 January 1906 they gathered, "... for a solemn ceremony to inaugurate their Mission on Southern Sudanese soil" (Nikkel 2001:105).

The missionaries did not find it easy to work with the Dinka. Although they appreciated some traits like their skills in building local huts, their knowledge in growing sorghum and their sexual morality they abhorred certain Dinka characteristics. Most of the team found the local people lazy, lying and prone to stealing (Werner et al 2000:248-249).

Lack of understanding and insensitivity to traditional beliefs alienated the missionaries from a powerful traditional spiritual leader called Biordit. The result was that Biordit warned his people against the foreigners. Very few actually came to the missionaries.

Sickness, frustration and other reasons continued to take its toll and by early 1908 all the missionaries except one left the area. The sole survivor Archibald Shaw had no intention of leaving. The Dinkas said he was the only white man with a Dinka heart. Nikkel described him as “Tenacious, opinionated, indomitable, authoritarian, arrogant, contentious, independently minded, resourceful and compassionate” (1998:103).

Shaw made friends with the Dinkas, learned their language and treated them with respect and patience. Realizing that it would take years before there would be a spiritual harvest he persevered in sowing the seeds of the gospel. Instead of attacking the traditional beliefs of the Bor Dinka he presented them with a positive gospel message entrusting the results to God. He once wrote: “... I am sure our best plan with regard to native superstitions and false beliefs is to seek to give the people the Truth as God has revealed it rather than to set about destroying their faith in what they have hitherto held sacred...” (quoted by Nikkel 1998:109).

In 1908 W H Scammell and his wife joined Shaw. They did splendid work but it was Shaw whom the Bor Dinka remembered as their spiritual father. *Machuor* as the Dinkas later called him respected the Dinka way of life. He used the centrality of cattle in the Dinka society to draw boys from poor families. Shaw made a contract with them promising to give them a young heifer if they would agree to study and work for three years at Malek mission station. In this way he gained the opportunity of reaching out. Some of these boys in later years became the founders of the Malek School (Werner et al 2000:252-253).

The first Dinka convert at Malek was a young man called Aruor. Aruor confessed Christ in 1914 but was only baptized in 1916 when he “stood the test of time”. Nikkel quotes Shaw’s translation of Aruor’s description of his spiritual experience: “... I was happy for the news of God and Jesus came to my heart and I was full of joy ... People are persecuting me and I do not fear their words. As you told me, I kept praying over it. Prayer is very dear to me...” (2001:122).

At his baptism Aruor received the name Jon. One year later Jon’s wife also accepted Christ. Although many would lose hope at such slow progress *Machuor* Shaw rejoiced at the first fruits of his ministry. Shaw knew the importance of the Scriptures in mother

tongue. He therefore called together a team of Bor Dinka. They translated the New Testament and the Anglican Prayer Book in the Dinka Bor dialect. His team members were Philip Anyang, Gordon Apeec and Daniel Deng Atong.

Deng Atong was brought up at Malek and in later years became one of the first two Dinka pastors ordained by CMS. In 1955 he became the first Sudanese bishop in the ECS (Werner et al 2000:251).

Another arrangement Shaw made to ensure that new missionaries would know his vision for CMS was to bring them to Malek before proceeding to their actual destinations. Their time at Malek exposed the newcomers to Shaw's dedication to evangelistic work among the Dinka. Shaw's commitment to bringing the gospel to the Dinka of Bor led to the opening of another station at Lau in 1912. This station wasn't a success and in 1920 it was abandoned.

5.3.2.3 CMS-work in the Lado Enclave and Western Equatoria

With the death of King Leopold of Belgium in 1909 a large area called the Lado Enclave came under Anglo-Egyptian control. Previously the area formed part of Leopold's Congo but in June 1910 it became part of Sudan. The Lado Enclave included a big part of present day Western Equatoria (Wheeler 1998b: 76).

The Egyptian part of the Condomonium government immediately promoted Islam in the Enclave. One of the changes that elicited much reaction was the replacement of Sunday with Friday as the official day of rest. Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries lodged complaints. They opposed the fact that British authorities in Sudan allowed Islam to spread in the South apparently with the consent of "Christian" officials (Werner et al 2000:253-254).

CMS desperately wanted to get mission work going in the Lado Enclave but lack of funds severely constrained them. The energetic efforts of Gwynne and Shaw in the end resulted in the Eastern Sudan Evangelical Mission (ESEM) donating a large amount of money to CMS to start new mission stations in the Enclave.

Other problems hindered the progression of the work. CMS wanted to start their work at Maridi. The prevalence of sleeping sickness in the area led to a government refusal. Shaw then proposed Yambio as the next best place. On 13 February 1913 Shaw, Hamilton and a Ugandan, Mose Manabi reached Yambio after a long trek by ox-carts.

Shaw immediately returned to his post at Malek. After a short time the Yambio team was strengthened by the arrival more missionaries. Clive Gore, Reverend William Haddow, a technical missionary teacher, called Ewell and a medical doctor, Dr Stones, blessed the team with various gifts. Gore and his wife stayed for 25 years until ill health forced him to return home (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:66).

The work at Yambio under the Zande people was very successful, especially when compared with the slow progress at Malek. Many people accepted the gospel message in remarkable ways. Dreams and visions were common ways of bringing people to salvation. Young men who were newly converted themselves preached to the people in their villages and met with great openness.

In 1917 the boarding school boasted of 75 boys, of whom 25 were sons of chiefs. A girl's school was also opened in 1919. It proved to be a great success. CMS made use of Ugandan evangelist-teachers and their influence left a permanent mark on mission work in Zande-land. Anderson wrote: "In many cases it was the young teacher-catechists who made the break-through with chiefs in outlying villages" (2000:289). One example was the fruit of the teacher-evangelist, Yisaka Adegigare. He worked in a village, called Masumbu and was so successful that eight more evangelists came from it in later years.

Translation work was viewed as very important. Missionaries translated the Gospel of Mark in Zande in 1917. It was distributed wide and far and the people responded enthusiastically to having a part of God's Word in their own language. The effect of Christianity on the Zande began to show in the decline of polygamy among the chiefs. There was also a ready acceptance on the side of the local population for their girls to receive formal education.

God is not tied to predetermined rules when building his kingdom. At times people had to stay for years in one place before they could show any converts. Others had a dramatic impact almost instantly. Richard Jones fell in the second category. In 1938 Jones and his

wife was sent to Yambio. Jones was deeply influenced by the well-known Rees Howell, and came to Sudan with a great burden to preach. On his arrival he was shocked to see the backslidden state of believers. He immediately launched into a fiery preaching program where he strongly called believers to repentance. Whereas the preaching of other missionaries was described as a bullet thrown at you by a certain Sudanese believer he said that Jones' messages "hit you with the force of a bullet fired from the gun" (Werner et al 2000:336).

The effect of his preaching was indeed dramatic. Meetings continued till the early morning hours and many Zande believers repented of their backslidden state. Not everybody was happy with Jones' uncompromising ways. The British District Commissioner decided to expel him partly because he sharply criticized both his fellow missionaries and the government authorities. Before he could be expelled Jones opted to leave by his own choice.

Although he was in Sudan less than three months his ministry had a lasting effect on the lives of several Sudanese and missionaries. A new flame for evangelism was kindled. Amosa Rakpi acted as the leader of the "revival leaders" after Jones' departure. Many years later he became the first Zande ECS-pastor. Manase Zindo was also touched by Jones' preaching. He became a powerful evangelist who "... would fear no magicians, no chiefs and no witch doctors" (Zindo 1998:94). Zindo became a missionary in his own country where he took the Gospel to very difficult areas.

Not all the fruit was positive though. After some time the fifteen apostles who emerged as leaders after Jones' departure fell into all kinds of excessive behaviour patterns. In this way they brought the whole revival in disrepute.

All the while other dedicated missionaries continued their work. When the possibility of mission work in Yei opened up in February 1917 Shaw sent Rev Paul Gibson to start the work there. Gibson was an evangelist at heart and his vision "... was for people rather than buildings" (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:67).

Gibson was instructed to use education as the main medium of reaching out to the local population. The strategy of using education as CMS' main mission "tool" shaped their mission methods for many years. Gibson complied and started so-called village-schools.

The central aim was to teach pupils the basics of Christianity and help them to read. In this way they would be able to read the Bible. He also initiated more academic schools with the idea of equipping and educating Southerners so that they could qualify for government jobs in the South.

Gibson chose promising students from his schools and trained them as teacher-evangelists. In turn they started new church schools and also acted as pastors to those who received Christ. From the very beginning they were taught to be self-reliant. Local communities took responsibility for the construction and maintenance of church-school buildings and teachers' houses. The ownership that the local believers took for the church property was very important since CMS had constant financial struggles (Werner et al 2000:285-286).

In 1930 Europe experienced a serious depression. It affected the CMS's budget so much that they could not promise to pay their teacher-evangelists any longer. The Sudanese believers did not stop their work because of the financial threat, but continued to preach and teach. The result was that Yei became a strong Christian centre. Anderson comments: "Church expansion did not depend on missionary help, but was seen to be the project of the people themselves" (2000:286).

5.3.2.4 CMS-work in Eastern Equatoria

Not all mission work was done with completely pure motives. CMS for instance opened a mission station at Opari in Eastern Equatoria mainly to counter the work started in the region by the Catholics. Archibald Shaw sent three Ugandan schoolteachers in 1917 to open a school. In 1920 Reverend Davis joined them and took charge of the school. Davis however found the place to be very lonely. He left after only one year. Although he still visited the area from time to time the actual Protestant work was done by a remarkable Sudanese convert Andrea Vuni Walle (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:67-68).

Vuni attended the school and worked as a house boy for Davis. He received his first Christian instruction from the missionary which according to his own account was not very deep (Wheeler 1998b:78). Shortly after his baptism Vuni was appointed as teacher and catechist. Both Davis and the three Ugandan teachers planned to leave the area for a

time and all the responsibility of the work fell on the young convert's shoulders. Wheeler writes that "... despite minimal support from CMS missionaries Andrea worked hard throughout the Madi and Acholi area, opening schools and training catechists..." (1998b:79).

For more than ten years Vuni worked all on his own except for the occasional visits from Shaw. In spite of being very isolated and having had very little training Vuni continued to open new schools and to train catechists. In 1926 a new mission station was opened at Ayaci-Pajok and this was only made possible by Vuni's perseverance and diligence.

When the CMS could not continue the work in Eastern Equatoria due to financial and staff constraints they handed their stations over to the Bible Churchman's Missionary Society (BCMS). This happened in the 1930's (Werner et al 2000:283). The BCMS missionaries did not find the work rewarding and withdrew again in the early nineteen-forties. At this point CMS acknowledged that local Sudanese leadership was the answer to their problem. Vuni was made a lay reader and later sent to attend a course in evangelist training in Yei. He was transferred to several places over the years but he always came back to Opari.

In 1948 The Africa Inland Mission took over the Protestant missionary responsibility in Eastern Equatoria from CMS and Vuni then continued his work under their supervision. His story will be taken up in Chapter 6.

5.3.2.5 CMS expansion in Western Equatoria

As was mentioned before education played a major role in the CMS mission strategy. In 1920 they opened an intermediate school in Juba. The school was later transferred to Loka. Reverend Lea-Wilson and his wife used their giftedness and devotion to elevate the school. In time it became the leading educational institution in Southern Sudan (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:71).

The first three Bari boys who attended the school were baptized in 1926. One of them Paulo Logali in later years became an important evangelist. CMS "out schools" were also started in the district and by 1945 there were at least forty of these.

It was heartening to see the work growing in Western Equatoria. Every year many new converts were baptized and by 1945 there were two thousand Bari believers in the Juba area alone. These Christians were active in reaching out to the community not only on Sundays, but also throughout the week (Werner et al 2000:284).

After the intermediate school at Juba had been transferred to Loka it flourished. In the time of the so-called Jones revival in 1938 Richard Jones visited Loka. He was invited to preach at the school and did so with uncompromising zeal. Many a heart had been stirred. Although the acting head master Leonard Sharland had some doubts about Jones' message he admitted he was aware of "... an extraordinary electrifying feeling of a presence and power dominating the place". He also said: "I believe it was a movement of the Holy Spirit in that Church" (quoted by Nikkel 2001:134).

Daniel Deng was the senior African teacher at the school. He deeply repented of his sins that day. Prayer groups were formed among the students and a new desire for evangelism started to burn in many hearts. Daniel Deng took a team of Dinka students to Malek during the school holiday. Their visit resulted in revival. Another teacher Jon Majak and a CMS missionary couple the Collisons were also deeply touched. From Loka they went to Akot and spread the revival to that area. Church attendance at Akot shot up from 120 each Sunday to about one thousand (Werner et al 2000:337).

A group of students with Mateo Waranwa as their leader went to Moru-land and spread Jones' revival message there. Some key Moru-believers became inspired by the preaching and became revival-leaders in the area. One of the Moru-revivalists Malaaki became blind after contracting a dangerous disease. His sickness did not stop him from continuing to serve God with all his heart. Eventually he became a well-known evangelist and songwriter.

From the above it is clear that God can use both long-term missionary initiatives and one day preaching events to grow his Church. Those involved in mission work in Sudan must remember it today as well.

Another place where CMS missionaries did tremendous work was at Lui. The work in Lui and the names of Dr Kenneth and Mrs Eileen Frazer are inseparable. Frazer and his wife

started their work in 1920. He came from a military background. Apart from his medical skills Frazer had considerable preaching abilities. He used all the above in a three-fold strategy to reach the Moru people for Christ. Frazer wanted to address all the needs of the people. He therefore built schools and hospitals, and preached, all at the same time. Although Frazer's personality and strategy played an important role in the success it was the love and dedication of the missionary couple that affected the Moru people most (Sharland 1998:146).

Not only was Frazer actively involved in all three these ministries, but he also understood the importance of training Sudanese believers to have the same vision. Anderson described the work of these trained Sudanese Christians in the following way: "Young Christian men were trained and sent out to the villages in pairs – a teacher and a medical dresser. A multi-purpose hut was erected. In the early morning, before breakfast, the teacher would assist the dresser in the dispensary. After breakfast the dresser helped the teacher in the school. On Sundays the dispensary/school would become a church and they would work together in preaching and in teaching the catechism" (2000:289).

These multi-purposed centres multiplied and by 1940 there were at least forty spread through Moru-land. The first Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, Elinana Ngalamu, came from Moru-land and was moulded by the ministry pattern established by Frazer.

In earlier years Maridi was the first choice of CMS for starting pioneer work in Western Equatoria. As was said earlier sleeping sickness in the area made such a move impossible. In 1922 the opportunity finally came to start a mission station there. Reverend William Haddow moved from Yambio to pioneer the work. His efforts were cut short when he contracted blackwater fever. While dying he told one of the boys who stayed with him at the mission: "I am going to my Father. Now you must go and tell your people about His love" (quoted by Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:73).

The boy took the dying missionary's word seriously. His name was Andrea Magaya and he became the first Maridi teacher-evangelist. In later years he also became a leading Zande pastor.

In 1929 three pioneers were sent to Kajo-Keji. One of these pioneer missionaries was Paulo Logali the Sudanese evangelist who got converted in the Juba Intermediate School. He and other Sudanese evangelists mostly did the work in Kajo-Keji. They were very successful and through their efforts the majority of the Kajo-Keji inhabitants became Christians.

5.3.2.6 CMS-work in Nilotic areas

In spite of ongoing resistance to the gospel among the Nilotic tribes Archibald Shaw refused to give up. When money became available in 1929 a new station was opened at Akot in Bahr al Ghazal. Thanks to the dedication of Reverend R S McDonald and his doctor wife Catherine the work progressed well. They established an efficient school and clinic (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:74).

As staff and funds became available, and opportunities opened up two more stations were opened at Gel River and Panekar. In timework also expanded to Rumbek.

From the mid-forties onward the CMS-work in the Dinka region experienced a spiritually dry period. Local leaders who once stood strong in their faith became backslidden and many returned to traditional practices. It was during this time that John Collinson and Jon Majak came to the area. They formed an effective preaching team with a simple but powerful message. Majak and Collinson visited people at the market, in their villages and even in the cattle camps. Their preaching impacted the lives of many and every month more than 100 new people would attend Sunday services. Eventually the 120 members increased to more than one thousand (Nikkel 2001:137-138).

As was so often the case the revival started to lose momentum. Collinson was transferred and Jon Majak did not enjoy the same freedom with the missionaries that succeeded him. In spite of fluctuations in the vitality of the Akot church it remained an important centre.

CMS also opened two stations in Nuer-land. In 1932 the station at Ler was established. Sadly the dreams for a successful medical mission program did not come off the ground. In later years this work was given over to the American Mission.

In 1936 another mission was started on Zaraf Island just at the beginning of the Sudd. Reverend McDonald and his doctor wife pioneered the work. They ran a school, mobile medical clinics and preached to the local Nuer. After their transfer to Nuba Mountains Reverend Charles Bertram and his wife who was also a doctor took over the work. Doctor May Bertram was a very energetic, dedicated doctor and this earned her the Nuer nickname *Nyawic*. *Nyawic* means “Woman or daughter of the People” (Werner et al 2000:303-304).

Reverend Bertram contracted blackwater fever in 1945 and died. His wife stayed on for another two years until the work was turned over to the Presbyterians. The Nuer had a high appreciation for the medical services they had received but showed very little interest in the gospel message.

In 1944 CMS opened an intermediate school at Abwong. It later moved to Atar and mainly catered for the Ngok Dinka and Padang Dinka. The intermediate school also changed to become a primary school. The first baptism in this area took place in 1947.

5.3.2.7 First churches among the Murle

Dick Lyth started his work in Sudan as a CMS missionary in Yambio. He later joined the army and became the officer in charge of three hundred men based at Boma. Lyth required all Christians to attend church services and all Muslims to attend their regular meetings in the mosque. The language of worship was Juba Arabic since it was the language used at work.

From these services a small local congregation was established. Their leader was a Murle Christian called Lado. Earlier in his life Lado had seen a light in the hut where he slept and heard a voice telling him to find the true God. After finding the true God Lado had to tell his people about Him. On his first visit to Dick Lyth's church Lado indeed found what he was searching for and became the church's leader (Werner et al 2000:349).

In later years Lado went to Pibor to work as an evangelist. He did not receive theological training, but served God wholeheartedly all his life. When Lyth in later years became District Commissioner he planted similar churches in Akobo, Pibor and Pochala.

5.3.2.8 CMS-work in the Nuba Mountains

After an initial visit by the CMS General Secretary in 1933 four missionaries moved to the Nuba Mountains in 1935. Sudan's government wanted them to establish schools and had high expectations. The first schools were opened at Kadugli and Salara. Due to the fact that the Nuba Mountains formed the border between the Muslim North and the South with its traditional religions Bishop Gelsthorpe describe the area as "... the most testing ground for Christian mission in Africa" (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:81).

CMS missionaries also started a medical program there. Unfortunately the work didn't progress as expected. As the CMS-dream for Nuba started to collapse the leadership took drastic action. They moved the MacDonald-couple from Zaraf Island and asked them to open a new station at Katcha. Joining them was Roland Stevenson a missionary with excellent linguistic and translation abilities.

CMS-government relations in Nuba were very good at first, but it gradually deteriorated. Whereas the government initially wanted CMS to take charge of education in Nuba, they later started to send even Muslim teachers to the area. This brought great tension. The CMS might not have fulfilled government expectations but it is important to note that many of the Nuba Church leaders who played key roles in establishing the Church in the region received their education in CMS-schools. On a secondary level the schools must be seen as contributors to the success of the Church in Nuba (Werner et al 2000:319-320).

5.3.2.9 CMS-work with Southern Sudanese in the North

From the late 1930's onward a steady stream of Southern Sudanese began to migrate to the North of the country. Two main reasons for this phenomenon were a search for work and education (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:55).

CMS-members in Khartoum and Omdurman seized the opportunity by starting Clubs for the Southern migrants where they could relax, get education and of course be exposed to the gospel. A hostel was also opened in Omdurman. Although the response to the Gospel was slow at first increasing numbers of Southerners showed openness to Christianity.

Eventually Southerners who became Christians in the North played a major role in evangelism in Southern Sudan.

5.4 American Mission

5.4.1 AM work in Northern Sudan

The American Mission (AM) was a Presbyterian mission. It was the biggest such mission in Egypt at the time. AM started work in Egypt in the eighteen hundreds. Eventually the work resulted in the establishment of Evangelical Church in Egypt.

After the Mahdi's defeat the mission board of the United Presbyterian Church (UPC) in America wanted to expand their work to Sudan. At first financial constraints prevented them to proceed with such plans. Then donations amounting to about \$11,000 opened the way. The Egyptian Missionary Association was asked by UPC to send two missionaries on an exploratory trip to Khartoum. In January 1900 Doctor Kelly Giffen and Andrew Watson arrived in Omdurman where they stayed with the two CMS missionaries (Parker 1998:89). After their report was evaluated Giffen and the medical doctor McLaughlin were appointed as pioneer Presbyterian missionaries to Sudan.

Giffen did not find his move from Egypt to Sudan easy. He regretted that he would have to leave his many friends behind. He also did not underestimate the responsibilities awaiting him and wrote: "Any act of indiscretion on our part ... either in dealing with the people or 'the powers that be', might affect very seriously, for years to come, the cause we wished to establish in the Sudan" (quoted by Parker 1998:90).

The Evangelical Church in Egypt also sent their representative to Sudan. Jabra Hanna was a young but promising pastor. Hanna and Giffen worked closely together and found a place where they could conduct worship services. For the first service they had to borrow chairs from a nearby restaurant. Nineteen men and three women attended. "And, so, in the last month of the year 1900, Presbyterianism was planted in Sudan" (Parker 1998:91).

Reverend Hanna eventually founded and pastured four small Evangelical congregations in Khartoum, Omdurman, Khartoum North and Wadi Halfa. Mission schools were opened. It even made provision for children from Muslim families although no direct evangelism was permitted. Doctor Griffen started a Boys School in 1905 after his brief time at Doleib Hill. His goal was to get the boys trained in different kinds of skilled work like carpentry and bricklaying. In 1909 a Girls Boarding school was opened up as well. In 1912-13 the Evangelical Church in Sudan became a separate Presbytery as distinguished from the Evangelical Church in Egypt.

5.4.2 Doleib Hill

Since Giffen and Doctor McLaughlin were prevented of doing actual mission work in Khartoum they decided to undertake a trip down the Nile to see where they could start a mission station. After a journey of about six hundred miles on the Nile they sailed up the Sobat River. After only twelve miles they found the ideal spot and called it Doleib Hill (Werner et al 2000:92).

They returned and after their report was accepted moved with their wives to plant the first AM mission station in March 1902. The two pioneer families found themselves in a unique situation. There was no mission history on which they could build and the Shulla or Shilluk language was not yet reduced to writing.

From the beginning the missionaries experienced a difference between their Protestant work ethic and the lifestyle of the Shilluk people. Shilluk workers who helped them build traditional huts worked only for two or three hours and then went home. They then returned for only an hour's work later in the day. The missionaries took it as laziness while the local men in fact only followed proven traditional ways of allowing mud to dry before applying a new layer (Parker 1998:95).

Giffen and the others slowly gained the trust of the Shilluk. They even succeeded in giving them a sense of a market economy. There was a small store at the mission station where people could buy items with the money they had received from the missionaries for work or sorghum.

In the area of evangelism Giffen believed that the Shilluk were not ready to accept the gospel message before many of their traditional ways and understanding had been changed. In his mind "... the task of evangelism required the reshaping of the entire culture of the people" (Parker 1998:97). The pioneers were not very successful in the evangelistic part of their mission work.

Giffen and McLaughlin built a church with mud walls and a thatched roof. The early services "... were memorable for ... the nakedness of the congregation, and the large number of spears stacked outside the door by the participants upon entering" (Parker 1998:99).

Giffen went back to America for furlough and after his return settled in Khartoum. Other Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Sudan and continued the work in the South. Ralph Tidrick, Thomas Lambie and Elbert McCreery were three bachelors. They helped with agricultural projects, medical work, Bible translation and evangelism. Reverend Carson was in charge of the church and evangelism (Werner et al 1998:128).

Reverend McCreery translated the gospel of John in Shilluk between 1909 and 1911 while David Oyler translated the gospel of Matthew. Oyler came to Sudan in 1909 and undertook extended preaching trips. He preferred Bible study above formal catechism and wanted to focus on adults rather than on children. Unfortunately he did not find many Shilluk people who were interested in his message. The Oyler family paid a high price for obeying their mission call. Two of their children died and Mrs Oyler for a time became mentally disturbed due to excessive grief (Werner et al 2000:238-239).

It took eleven years before the first Shilluk was converted. Abdullah Nyidhok related how the words of Reverend Carson "... did not lodge in my head, or feelings" However when Lambie spoke to him it was more appealing since "The talk of Dr. Lambie had no quarrelling" (Anderson 1998:129). Nyidhok also had a dream that made him even more receptive to Lambie's words and in 1914 he accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. A while later Nyidhok's sister Dok became the first Shilluk woman who accepted Christ. She attributed her conversion to her brother's influence.

In 1921 Alfred Heasty appeared on the Doleib Hill scene. He had an incredible amount of responsibilities to handle. All the other missionaries had either died or left. Heasty used innovative ways of bringing the Shilluk boys to school. This included personal visiting and even the taking the school to the cattle camps where the boys were gathered in the grazing fields.

On top of his many other duties Heasty trained teachers to help him in the school. This training was so successful that the Sudanese teachers could run the school effectively and on their own when he left for furlough in 1925. Heasty also handed a lot of the church's responsibility to the local Christians. They accepted the challenge and the result was significant church growth (Anderson 2000:306).

In 1933 a school was build especially for girls at Doleib Hill. Elsie Grove was a seasoned missionary who took this task upon herself. Meeting with many difficulties and a lot of resistance she also took the innovation route. Instead of only teaching girls she opened her school for women of all ages. She also changed the syllabus to fit the needs of the women and moved out of the school buildings to have her classes under the trees. Her teaching method had positive results and her "school" grew to become a large network of classes in many different villages (Werner et al 2000:275-276).

In 1939 it was discovered that Heasty's wife had cancer. They had to return to America. The next year Don McClure returned from furlough. He was prevented from returning to his actual station at Akobo due to the war in Ethiopia that spilled over the Sudan border. McClure therefore took over the work at Doleib Hill.

At this time all the Shilluk Christian leaders decided to introduce polygamy in the Christian Shilluk society by taking second wives themselves. McClure opposed their decision very strongly. Finally one of the church leaders called La Amoleker announced in public that he would not take a second wife. Other leaders then followed his example. This event and the request of a respected old man to receive baptism before dying had a big impact on the community. Many Shilluk came to Doleib Hill to confess their faith. Five new churches were established.

La Amoleker's stand for his convictions brought him close to McClure. Once he went to stay with a traditional sorcerer or *jal yath* who had cursed him. After some time the *jal yath* "... confess his defeat, and his faith in Jesus" (Werner et al 2000:334).

La Amoleker continued to promote Christianity in the face of growing opposition from traditional spiritual leaders. He was clearly the right person to head the new church. McClure was convinced of his abilities and wanted him ordained as pastor. The ordination took place on 10 January 1941. After his ordination La Amoleker returned to Doleib Hill. He immediately arranged for the election of Shilluk church elders. The first official Southern Sudanese Presbyterian Congregation was born.

5.4.3 Nasir

In 1909 Reverend McCreery and Doctor Thomas Lambie explored the expansion of AM's work to Nuer-land. They chose a place called Kwain Lual Thon close to Nasir as the site for the new mission station. From the moment they arrived the missionaries were warmly welcomed. Many Nuer and Anuak visited their clinic. One of the first Nuer believers was a man called Pok Jok. He was treated by Lambie and also heard the gospel from him. In 1919 he was baptized as the first fruit of AM work in the area (Werner et al 2000:240).

Several incidents taxed the missionaries. Lambie's three year old boy accidentally burnt down their house. McCreery's wife who was still at Doleib Hill became very sick. They had to leave Sudan altogether. Doctor Lambie's wife joined him at Nasir, but she also became sick. This forced the Lambie's to go away for extended periods. Lambie persevered through all the trials and in 1915 he erected the first church in Nasir (Anderson 1998a: 132-134).

Lambie was a pioneer at heart and felt the call of doing mission work in Ethiopia. In 1919 he moved to Gambella where he started a remarkable ministry. He was lost for Sudan but a great gain for Ethiopia.

At Nasir an extended school system was developed. The system included village schools, out-schools and the highly acclaimed school in Nasir itself. Nasir's church also grew much faster than the one at Doleib Hill. A special evangelistic program that ran from December

1921 up to middle February 1922 culminated in the baptism of eighteen new believers. In 1923 thirty-six new converts were baptized (Werner et al 2000:308).

5.4.4 Akobo

Between 1926 and 1936 AM faced hard financial times. They therefore did not consider expanding their work. That was until the arrival of Don McClure. McClure joined the AM-team at Doleib Hill in 1935. He did not agree with their “survival-mode” of working and proposed a new work among the Anuak. Through his persistence he was allowed to start a new station at Akobo in 1937.

The person who actually pioneered the work at Akobo was the Anuak evangelist Joel Gila Mun. He was placed in Akobo in 1935. McClure opened the station and then planned to leave for only one year's furlough. However he was prevented by war to return to Akobo until 1943. When he eventually succeeded he took the work up with all his heart and even proposed a bigger 15-year plan on how to reach the Anuak (Werner et al 2000:309).

McClure wanted fifteen missionaries to be available for fifteen years. They had to do evangelism, Bible translation, the training of a local church leadership, education, medical work and agriculture in a pre-planned, systematic way. After fifteen years a strong enough local church would have been established allowing the foreign missionaries to leave (Werner et al 2000:347).

5.4.5 Division of the American Mission in two parts

In 1948 AM was divided into a Northern and Southern Mission. Al Obeid fell under the northern mission and there a popular program was initiated. It included the opening of a night school, a club, a sports club and a hostel. Several people accepted Christ through these programs resulting in the first Evangelical Church to be planted in Independent Sudan in 1961.

At Malakal a strategically important station was established. Missionaries built a printing press in the 1950's calling it Spearhead Press. The manager was a Sudanese called Mading de Garang. Mading and his staff produced a monthly magazine and named it Light.

At the same time the Catholics produced a magazine called Messenger. Whereas the Catholic paper felt it was necessary to criticize the government in 1957 for taking over mission schools the Light kept itself to spiritual matters (Werner et al 2000:353).

Perhaps it would have been appropriate for the Protestant media to have a stronger voice in matters relevant to the moment. However it must be remembered that it is always easier to speak from the sideline than when you are “in the fire”.

One good thing was that the Sudanese workers at the printing press were trained well enough to continue the work on their own after all the missionaries were forced to leave the country. Through the years they published many Bibles and catechisms, doing a great service to the Sudanese Church in this way (Werner et al 2000:353-354).

5.4.6 Work among the Murle

The District Commissioner-cum-missionary, Dick Lyth, started work among the Murle. He wanted AM to get involved as well. In 1952 AM posted a doctor and two ordained men at Pibor. When the missionaries arrived they were able to build on the work started by the Murle evangelist Lado. Lado, as was described earlier, became a believer under the preaching of Lyth in Boma.

5.5 Sudan United Mission

5.5.1 Karl Kumm and the founding of the Sudan United Mission

In 1895 a young German by the name of Karl Kumm heard an inspiring lecture by a missionary working in North Africa. Kumm was so deeply touched that he decided to devote his life to mission work in Africa. He wanted to focus on the belt across Africa where Muslim North Africa met with Christianity and traditional religions more to the south.

Kumm felt called to evangelize African Muslims working out of Northern Sudan. He tried to sell his vision to established mission societies but without success. His failure did not discourage him. Instead he created a new mission called the Sudan United Mission (SUM).

Spartalis quotes Kumm's conviction for creating a new mission society: "In view of the present crisis in the West Central Sudan where, unless the gospel of Christ be brought ... to Northern Nigeria, the million numbered pagan tribes ... will go over to Islam, and in view of the fact that none of the Missionary Societies ... feels itself at present able to do anything for the evangelisation of the Sudan, we should rejoice if the Lord should enable the Free Church ... to join in a United Sudan Mission." (1981:2).

Kumm received enough support to start his society under the name Sudan United Mission. His biggest success was in Australia and New Zealand. He toured the two countries giving many inspiring lectures to large audiences. An Australian and New Zealand SUM Committee was formed in October 1911. Understanding the challenges awaiting prospective missionaries Kumm wrote: "As the Mission does not want to send out apprentices, but masters and leaders of men, these masters and leaders of men are trained before they are accepted by the Mission" (quoted by Spartalis 1981:5).

The Anglican Bishop Gwynne was in full support of Kumm's initiative. He wrote the following words of encouragement: "Here is the opportunity to drop our petty differences and fight together in one solid band for Christ. What does it matter whether Baptist or Congregationalist, Presbyterian or Methodist, Quaker or Church of England step into the breach and seize the place for Christ?" (Quoted by Spartalis 1981:9).

5.5.2 Beginning of SUM-work in Sudan

SUM-work in Sudan was started by four Presbyterians from New Zealand and Australia. They were Duncan McDiarmid, Wilfrid Mills, Ron Trudinger and Martin Trudinger. In 1913 they arrived in Melut in Upper Nile and proposed to start a school in the town. Their proposal was turned down in no unclear language by the authorities. The resident British governor was opposed to missionary work and told them he would only allow them to work among the rural Padang Dinka. (Werner et al 2000:262-263).

Doctor Ron Trudinger was finally allowed to build a hospital in Melut in 1918. He stayed for four decades in the area working tirelessly as a doctor, evangelist and translator. In 1945 he had the whole New Testament translated in Dinka Padang. Missionaries loved Trudinger and Dinka converts alike. In short: "He was a legend" (Anderson 1998b: 149).

SUM did not have much money or personnel when beginning work in Sudan. While it hindered their work in some ways it also stimulated creativity and perseverance. A new missionary Keith Rimmer opened a mission station at Rom in 1924. The first three believers were baptised after about seven years. Pioneer mission work was not easy and needed people with patience and perseverance.

The first believers also had to face opposition from their own people. A certain Nyikai and his friend Ane were brought before the village council because they said that the God they served was bigger than the traditional god *Deng Dit*. Nyikai and his friend were fined and warned never to speak against *Deng Dit* in a disrespectful manner again (Spartalis 1981:35).

Another unique instrument in God's hands was Lual Ayei. Lual became a Christian at Rom. Two Dinka teachers played an important role in bringing Lual to faith in Christ. They were Gabriel Col and Gabriel Kuc. Lual made a firm commitment to "... spend the rest of his life revealing the New Testament to his people – and to anyone" (Anderson 1998b:151).

As a wandering evangelist he made a strong impact especially on adults in the Upper Nile region. He discarded his charms, which was an unthinkable action for a Dinka of that time unless he was convinced of having some stronger Source of protection. Lual then started to visit adult men and discussed the gospel with them in their traditional gathering places. During these visits he would read from the Bible and sing hymns to his audience. Lual was not afraid to challenge the powers of the traditional gods. In fact he "... led his hearers in testing and challenging the devils and their powers, proving that they were nothing" (Anderson 1998b: 152).

Lual Ayei did not look like the traditional evangelist. He "... always looked like a villager ... He was very thin, somewhat tall, one-eyed, strange-looking, but with a most attractive manner. He electrified people in prison and in the hospital with his presence, his friendliness, his concern, his aliveness, his prayers" (Anderson 1998b: 156). Through his evangelistic efforts quite a number of older men accepted Christianity. This was a very special work of God, because at the time most adult Dinka saw Christianity as the religion of children.

Deng Adier one of the most feared and respected men of the Ng'ok Dinka tribe became a Christian through the songs and stories of Lual. He threw his magic charms in the river and transferred his position as diviner to his younger brother. To the other people of his tribe it was absolutely incomprehensible how a powerful person could give up all his power and status for a foreign faith. Deng Adier remained faithful to Christ all his life (Anderson 1998b: 153-154).

Lual Ayei never got rid of all his bad habits. Like most Dinka men he smoked tobacco and would even use pages of the New Testament to roll a cigarette if he could not find any other paper. This behaviour shocked many Christians "...but they all hasten to add that Lual Ayei knew the whole New Testament by heart. It had become part of him" (Anderson 1998b: 157).

At one stage Lual started to smuggle *bango* or hashish into the prisons where he preached. He even started to smoke it himself with the result that he was imprisoned. After his release he did not smoke *bango* again, but at times he joined traditional drinking parties. He was also known for his quarrelsome nature. Yet in spite of his negative traits it cannot be denied that Lual was used by God to bring many adult Dinka men to faith in Christ.

The Depression year's abroad affected the SUM-work in Sudan and other mission organizations. In spite of financial difficulties new missionaries joined the Sudan team and a new station was opened at Paloich in 1932. A certain Reverend Adam Loudon took charge of the Paloich station. He, his wife and three Dinka converts did evangelistic work in the area. A small school for boys was also opened.

Although the missionaries poured their energy in the work among Dinkas SUM's main vision was to reach the people of the Nuba Mountains. When Protestant missionaries were expelled from Ethiopia in the early thirties SUM agreed to sell the stations of Melut and Paloich to the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). When their opportunity came in 1938 they handed all their work in Upper Nile except the station at Rom over to The Sudan Interior Mission (Werner et al 2000:312-313).

5.5.3 SUM-work in the Nuba Mountains

Spartalis correctly points out that Nuba tribes resisted the continuous Muslim assault for many years and would also not easily accept Christianity. The Nubas "... were not prepared to give up their ways for another 'talk' until it had proved itself. This helps us to understand why the gospel was not accepted by the Nubas for so many years" (1981:500). It is against this background the SUM efforts must be viewed.

5.5.3.1 Heiban

Evangelizing the tribes of Nuba had been the prime desire of SUM since its founding. In 1920 the Sudan government at last allowed them to work in this "wild" area. Reverend Harry Arnold and Wilfrid Mills surveyed the area and chose Heiban as the place where they wanted to establish their first station. The Anglo-Egyptian authorities regarded the people of Heiban as "one of the most lawless tribes in the Province" (Spartalis 1981:45). Arnold and Mills on the other hand believed that Heiban was the place where SUM had to start a work. The government authorities finally agreed. Within the first few years' eight missionaries manned the station.

SUM-missionaries succeeded in building good relationships with the local population. Their influence was so strong that the Governor of the Province wrote the following: "We have to thank the Mission to a very great extent that the attitude of these Nubas has now entirely changed. They no longer have any fear of the white man and Government officials, but on the contrary are extremely friendly." (Quoted by Spartalis 1981:46).

Although the above words were a bit optimistic if looking at the further history it did prove a very important point. The missionaries succeeded in winning the trust of the people where the gun of the government had failed to gain their cooperation by force.

Heiban became an important centre for SUM. In line with government policy a school for boys was started in 1927 and a school for girls followed in 1928. The local people did not value education. To them it was not a felt need even though the missionaries and especially the government saw education as of great importance. In spite of many

difficulties the McDiarmids worked for eleven years to develop linguistics on the Heibani language. They also devoted themselves to education.

Schools at the mission stations were elementary but still had an impact. One of the pupils "... so rapidly travelled along the road from the Stone Age to the twentieth century that he was appointed ... paramount chief ... translated Matthew's Gospel into the tongue of his people, built a church for them in which he led them in worship, became a Member of Parliament in the Sudan Government." (McDiarmid quoted by Spertalis 1981:55).

Governor Newbold also tried to encourage the missionaries by saying that "...the Nubas are deserving of the best that can be given them in religion and education, and the best that can be given them is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as set out in the lives and teaching of white men" (quoted by Werner et al 2000:315). In the end he was not satisfied with the SUM-schools and SUM's inability to expand their educational work. He therefore established schools staffed by Coptic Christian teachers from Egypt in the area.

In spite of renewed efforts SUM simply could not provide the same quality of education given by the Government. Lack of finances and trained educationalists were main reasons for their failure. SUM's main vision in any case was evangelism but they had to busy themselves with education due to government pressures. Then the board of the SUM-branch in Australia and New Zealand read a book by a SUM missionary in Nigeria called *Indigenous Church*. It led them to make a firm decision of putting evangelism as their first priority. Education would not be abandoned but it would only follow in places where churches had been planted. Volunteer evangelists would then be trained and sent to open bush schools (Werner et al 2000:316-317).

After serious reflection and long deliberation SUM-leaders decided to make the planting of a strong, self-reliant indigenous church in the Nuba Mountains their main goal. Eventually they were much more successful in achieving this goal than in what the government required of them.

5.5.3.2 Abri

In 1923 another station was opened at Abri. The Koalib tribe resident in this area was still resentful against the foreign intruders who tried to control them. They did not distinguish between the missionaries and British government officials. It made the missionaries' message unacceptable at first. It took about fifteen years before the first converts had been baptized in this resistant community.

Abri eventually became a centre of wonderful church growth. It all started with Maki a pupil in the Abri mission school who shared the gospel of Mark and some Old Testament stories with the people in his village Kwedhiber during his holiday time (Werner et al 2000:317). With his return to Abri in the new semester Maki often told William Lunn that his people at home wanted the missionaries to visit them. Kwedhiber was about twenty miles from the mission station. Lunn had many urgent needs to attend to at the mission station, but finally agreed. He was disappointed when it seemed as if the villagers' main interest was for him to show them a good place to dig a well.

In spite of his already full program Lunn and two other missionaries saw the potential of starting a work and decided to visit Kwedhiber every month. Their visits resulted in the chief asking them to send Christian teachers to come and live in his village. Lunn agreed on the condition that the villagers had to build a school and two huts for the teachers (Spartalis 1981:80-81).

After the school and huts had been built three Nuba Christians were given the responsibility of outreach too. They were Tima, Yuhanna and Kanja. Each one had a helper and they rotated on a monthly basis. The Christian leaders conducted school in the week and church services on Sundays. After only three months there was already a small group of believers. Chief Shalu was one of the first who accepted Christ (Spartalis 1981:81).

In a short time at least thirty people became interested in Christianity. The church-schools system soon spread to other villages. Spartalis quotes William Lunn who wrote: "Only last Sunday, 29th June, 1941, two of these (young men) made their stand for Christ. They belong to a village school commenced by one of the young men who has had all his

teaching from native Christian teachers at the Kwedibher School and are the first fruits of his work” (1981:81).

The spontaneity and indigenous character of the movement in the area was clearly a work from God. It had revealed once again the importance of the role played by local Christians.

Samwiil Jangul who was instrumental in the emergence of the Sudanese Church of Christ came as a young boy to Abri in September 1940. Jangul accepted Christ and attributed it to the prayers and examples of his teacher Evelyn Lambie. He wrote: “When Evelyn Lambie finished her period of teaching every day I accompanied her back to her home. Before we parted from one another, she always invited me for prayer. So there in her room we knelt down ... and she pleaded with her Lord for me” (quoted by Conwell 1985:34). In Chapter 6 I shall look in more detail at the ministry of this remarkable man.

5.5.3.3 Tabanja, Umm Dorein and Kauda

In November 1929 SUM expanded its work to the southern parts of Nuba Mountains. A new station was opened at Tabanja among the people of the Krongo tribe. The Wilsons manned it and a Heibani Christian called Kabacu. The Depression abroad, disease and shortage of staff hindered the work at Tabanja to progress. In spite of the many setbacks a new missionary couple the Hansfords joined the SUM-team. They reduced the Krongo language to writing and in 1932 finalized a draft edition of the Gospel of Mark (Spartalis 1981:62).

In 1933 a fourth station was opened at Umm Dorein in the Moro Hills. The team who went there “... was determined to pursue evangelistic work among the adult Moro population rather than placing an emphasis on an educational programme with children” (Spartalis 1981:69). Although the government had very specific educational aims for missionaries working in the Nuba Mountains that agreed to the “experiment”.

While SUM continued to focus on evangelism the government retained their emphasis on education. Government officials in Kordofan spoke with the British Executive of SUM and emphasized the need for educational work among the Otoro and Tira people to the south of Heiban. All the important role players gathered in Khartoum in 1934, which eventually led to

the opening of a new station at Kauda. At about the same time several new recruits volunteered from Australia, New Zealand and Britain. Due to the increase in staff the work could be expanded.

After what had happened at Kwedibher, SUM-missionaries realized they had to recognize God's call of gifted Nubas to full time Christian ministry. Pito Matheli was the first candidate to receive formal training. Matheli felt a call to evangelize the Moro-tribe (Werner et al 2000:317-318). He was sent to the Teachers' Training College at Heiban where he made such a good impression that the school asked for another evangelist of his calibre to be sent for training.

Tuko Hicks was elected with the prospect of sending him to work among the Otoro people at Kauda. Earlier Tuko built a hut in his village that was specifically set apart for prayer (Spartalis 1981:82). Both evangelists did excellent jobs at the stations where they were placed.

5.5.3.4 Nyakma

In 1952 Doctor Roy Conwell and his wife started a leprosy colony at Nyakma. In Conwell's own words "The building of the hospital ... was a promise of hope" (1985:50). The program was very successful and within a short time five hundred people lived at the settlement. One of the first patients was the mother of Samwiil Jangul founder of SCOC. A large farm was started and maintained by the patients. Spiritual work also progressed and a church with a capacity of holding three hundred people was constructed in 1955. Kwedia Thunga who was a leper himself for some time pastored the leprous believers at Nyakma (Werner et al 2000:350).

5.3.5 Annual Bible courses and a Bible school at Shwai

In 1948 annual Bible courses were introduced. These courses were held simultaneously in all the churches in the Nuba Mountains and were seen as a major reason for church growth in the area. Spartalis describes the event: "For the Nuba Church it has become almost a Keswick style of Conference, emphasizing new life, the victorious life, the abundant life,

that is the believer's heritage through daily renewal by the Spirit of God in the life of the believer" (1981:88). The annual meetings indeed kept the church together in very difficult times. It is still practised today.

The clear need for trained evangelists led to the opening of the W L Mills Memorial Bible School at Shwai in 1959. Shwai was a village to the west of Heiban. It became apparent that anti-church feelings from the side of Northern Sudanese leaders were on the increase. For this reason the task of establishing the Bible school became all the more urgent. Samwiil Jangul translated big parts of the curriculum from English to Arabic in 1958. Missionaries devoted themselves to getting the buildings finished. In April 1959 the school was opened.

Tom Soper was the principal and Samwiil Jangul the vice-principal. Jangul saw the Bible school as of extreme importance for the future of the Church in Nuba. He said: "When I reached Shwai and started to teach the men ... I knew that the Lord was going to use these men, together with the elders of the church, to let the infant church grow. So I spent all my energy and the little knowledge I had to teach and practise before the students, so that they would become examples before the church" (quoted by Conwell 1985:78).

In 1962 the Sopers were forced to leave Sudan. Samwiil Jangul was left alone to finish the teaching of the students' final year.

5.5.3.6 Last years of SUM in the Nuba Mountains

When it became clear that missionaries would have only limited time left for work in the Nuba Mountains missionaries started to focus on Bible translation. Working day and night they managed to produce translations of the New Testament in five Nuba languages.

As independence came closer the Sudan Government issued the Missionary Societies Act. The Act placed severe limits on what missionaries could do and SUM felt they could not sign it. They thought their departure would save the local Church from the limits that were imposed on SUM as a mission society. In December 1962 SUM missionaries finally left the Nuba Mountains. William Lunn was Field Superintendent. He handed the responsibilities over to Jangul (Conwell 1985:81-82).

Although SUM was a small organisation with very limited funds it succeeded in giving birth to a strong indigenous church. Anderson wrote: “The Church that they planted was self-supporting and indigenous to an unusual degree. This was due to the particular vision of SUM missionaries, and also, no doubt, to the limited resources possessed by the Mission” (2000:313).

Anderson’s last observation is of particular significance for the present day Church in Sudan where outside help has become much more readily available. Abundant material inflow from the broader Christian community into Southern Sudan often leads to the weakening of the Church.

5.6 Sudan Interior Mission

The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) started their work in Sudan in 1937. SIM believed that their main work was to plant local churches through evangelism. According to their philosophy responsibility had to be transferred to the local church as soon as possible (Werner et al 2000:310-311).

At the time of SIM’s arrival in Sudan the government had placed a high premium on education. They welcomed SIM to start work in Sudan, but under the condition that they had to do educational work as well. The condition was reluctantly accepted.

SIM received the Blue Nile Province as the area where they could establish a ministry. They were asked to work among the many small tribes collectively called the Burun who lived along the Sudan-Ethiopia border. After preliminary explorations SIM presented work proposals to the government and it was accepted. They then started to work among the Mabaan at Doro and the Uduk at Chali al Fil in December 1937.

5.6.1 Chali al Fil

The anthropologist Wendy James writes: “The Uduk were once so remote that the Anglo-Egyptian government in the Sudan ... decided that if American fundamentalist missionaries were allowed to work there, at least they could not cause significant disruption” (2000:86).

In many ways the Uduk were very different from what Westerners were used to. The Uduk society for instance operated along matrilineal lines. This was probably the result of the slave raiding that threatened the very survival of the tribe in the past. Women could marry several men in order to produce as many children as possible (Werner et al 2000:312).

Malcolm and Enid Forsberg who pioneered the work had to face many difficult beliefs and rituals. Once it did not rain for a long time and the rainmaker of the area called Babu realized his life was in danger if rain did not come soon. Malcolm Forsberg writes (Forsberg 1958:150):

At Babu's village a bull had already been slaughtered and the blood caught in a gourd and mixed with water. Babu washed his ten smooth white rain stones in the mixture and sprinkled the blood on the roofs and around the doorways of the houses, in a ceremony reminiscent of the Passover in Egypt. The rainmaking was finished and we went home. The next afternoon it poured. Babu's witchcraft had worked and it had saved his life. It would be useless for us to tell the superstitious Uduks that the rainmakers could not make rain

Twins were buried alive shortly after they had been born. These and other traditional habits were unacceptable to the Forsbergs. They wanted to show the people a positive gospel, but found it very hard. After Forsberg went for a friendly visit to a nearby village he returned discouraged. He writes: "The negative aspect of the gospel was growing in the minds of the Uduks. Christians were people who did not drink beer, who did not talk about sex, and who married only one wife. To counter this negative approach, we preached Christ as much as our limited knowledge of the language would allow" (1958:152).

The Forsbergs' first convert was a man called Mona. He struggled to understand spirits caused the concept of sin since in the minds of the Uduk all troubles in life. However after his conversion he wanted to learn more. Mona started to wear clothes. To his relatives he had become "... a clothes-wearing foreigner and they had no intention of doing likewise" (Forsberg 1958:165).

Since the missionaries now had a regular attendant of their Sunday services they wanted to write indigenous songs. One stumbling block was that they only knew the tunes used at Uduk dance events. Mona told them the tunes were unsuitable for Christian songs since they were closely associated with beer drinking and sex. For this reason the missionary couple put Uduk words to European hymns. The Uduk who at times came to the morning services quickly picked up the tunes.

As the years passed a small number of Uduks professed to be Christians. Enid Forsberg had linguistic skills and with the help of Mona translated the Gospel of John in Uduk. In 1943 not long after this important event Mary Beam and Betty Cridland joined the pioneer missionaries at Chali. Walter Ohman and his wife also stayed at the station while the Forsbergs went on furlough.

Education was seen as an important aspect of missionary work in most parts of Sudan. For this reason the missionaries at Chali tried to get Uduk boys into schools. Western education was completely foreign to the Uduks and the missionaries fought an uphill battle to get anybody permanently interested. In the end they established a small school for boys and another for girls. Enid Forsberg did a lot of work reducing the Uduk language to writing. A clinic was also opened (Arensen 1998:81).

In 1951 the missionaries at Chali came up with the idea of developing separate Christian villages. The missionaries wanted to give Christian couples a chance of living with their own children in a Christian environment. Although several young couples came to stay in the Christian villages, the men often returned to the villages of their sisters to visit their nephews and cousins. In Uduk culture uncles were largely responsible for the upbringing of their sisters' children (Arensen 1998:81).

By trying to change the Uduk society and forcing it into the mould they found comfortable the missionaries nearly wrecked all their work. They saw the Uduk culture as intrinsically evil and wanted to "protect" believers from it. A book with rules of conduct was developed. Strict rules made it difficult for Christian Uduks to have any real contact with non-Christians in their tribe. They were cut off from participating in events that brought the Uduk society together.

The sad result of forcing the “Christian” rules on converts was that Uduks who became interested in the gospel had to “... make the hard decision to abandon his or her culture in order to become a Christian. To be a Christian meant to be totally cut off from one’s roots” (Arensen 1998:81). Several men and women took the decision. Quite a number of these converts however found the constraints of life in the Christian villages too much and left after a short time.

Fortunately the missionaries had also translated the New Testament into Uduk. In 1963 most missionaries were deported from Sudan. Betty Cridland and Mary Beam stayed until March 1964. In the last week before their departure a truck arrived at Chali. It was loaded with the newly printed Uduk New Testaments. The two ladies could distribute the precious books before they had to leave (Arensen 1998:82).

After the last missionaries had left, their carefully planned “Christian villages” collapsed. Fortunately it did not signal the end of Christianity in the Uduk community. From the ashes of the first mission work an indigenous church developed. This was possible because the Uduk had the Bible in their mother tongue and could therefore work out how to be Christians within their own cultural understanding.

Wendy James visited the Uduk shortly after the last missionaries had left. From an anthropological perspective she was highly critical of their work. Years later she had closer contact with missionaries in refugee camps. It affected her previous views and prompted her to write: “I would now like to write more sympathetically about their commitment than I ever thought would be possible for me. The (Uduk) people themselves now nearly all claim to be Christians, and partly because of this the old ‘conspirational’ feeling I had shared with them has had to take on new forms” (James 2000:81).

It is interesting to see how hostile Muslims in the area were against missionaries in the nineteen sixties. Wendy James went to Southern Blue Nile as an anthropologist. She clearly had no intentions of doing any spiritual work. James writes: “It was important and in fact easy to establish that I was not a missionary – accepting local beer made this clear – and I soon found myself welcomed as a convenient ear for grumbles about the tough puritan discipline of the mission days” (2000:73).

In spite of this the police restricted James' movements in the area of Chali apparently believing she was a covert missionary. A delegation of Muslim merchants also went to the Kurmuk district authorities to complain on her presence. They had the same suspicions and did not want any Christian missionary close to them.

5.6.2 Doro

Doctor Bob Grieves and his wife Claire went to work among the Mabaan people at Doro. They started their work at the end of January 1940. Apart from language study they ran a clinic for the local people. Doro was close to the Ethiopian border and the missionaries found themselves caught between the Italian invaders and Sudanese forces. Barely seven months after their arrival two Italian war planes dropped bombs on the mission station. Both Bob and Claire Grieves were seriously injured. Both eventually died of their wounds. The residents of Doro who survived the attack went to Melut. They could only return after the Italian forces had been driven from the area (Werner et al 2000:312).

5.6.3 SIM-work in Dinka-land

In 1938 SIM took over the mission work started by SUM in Paloich and Melut. Their efforts of reaching out to the Dinka were largely unsuccessful. They also started new stations Banjang that was close to the town of Renk in Upper Nile and at Abaiyat. Even here the missionaries experienced that the hearts of the local pastoralists were still closed to the gospel message (Werner et al 2000:312-313).

5.7 Africa Inland Mission

5.7.1 Eastern Equatoria

The Africa Inland Mission (AIM) was the largest Protestant mission in Kenya at the time. AIM-missionaries also worked in many other parts of Eastern Africa. In Congo they had a distinct evangelism program with many Congolese evangelists. AIM became interested in the southern regions of Sudan and accepted the chance to work there when the opportunity came.

CMS-missionaries had started a work in Eastern Equatoria several years earlier. Lack of personnel made it very difficult for them to maintain the work in all the areas where they had mission stations. The CMS-leader Paul Gibson made an agreement with AIM in 1948 to take over the work initiated by CMS in Eastern Equatoria (Wheeler 1998b: 82).

The first AIM missionaries in Sudan were a mixture of European expatriates and Congolese evangelists. Cooperation between the different missionaries was good. They came to Opari in 1949. John Buyse and his wife Mabel were the driving force behind AIM's decision to start a work in Sudan. By the time that John Buyse arrived at Opari he was already sixty-seven years old.

Work progressed quickly. Within a year AIM had established their work in Katire Ayom and Logotok as well. In 1952 they went to Torit where their main work was evangelism. A new work was started at Irwoto close to Kapoeta in 1953. In the same year AIM started a water project where they drilled water holes in all the areas where they had mission stations (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

Andrea Vuni who played a vital role in keeping the church in Eastern Equatoria alive for many lonely years had to adapt to working with a team of missionaries. Wheeler writes: "We don't know how Andrea Vuni felt about this new beginning, which with American expertise, and Congolese evangelistic energy, must have felt quite overwhelming" (1998b:83). He clearly still enjoyed a leadership position in the Christian community and was accepted as such by the new missionaries.

At Logotok Doctor Reitsma opened a small hospital. The medical work formed an important part of the mission efforts in that area. Early in 1955 one of Reitsma's servants burnt down the hospital. The man was a member of the Ebaree tribe and his tribe was at war with the people of Logotok. He resented the fact that the wounded people of Logotok received treatment while his own people would not dare to come for help.

In 1953 AIM realized the need for local leaders to be trained. They chose Primon Hakim as their first candidate to go to a Bible School in Congo. Pastor Andrea Vuni followed him in 1954. Unfortunately Hakim became sick while in Congo and this made him to lose a year. He and Vuni finished together in 1955. Insecurity due to fighting prevented other prospective pastors to go to Congo for about two years. (Interview: Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

In 1956 the program of installing and equipping Sudanese leaders received fresh impetus. Andrea Vuni was ordained as the first AIC-pastor by Reverend William Beatty on 17 June 1956. In the same year Thomas Lohima, Abednego Vuni and Nikolao Oling were sent to Adi Bible School in Congo. Martin Achaia went to the training institute at Linga. The Sudanese leaders graduated in 1957 and returned to work as evangelists in their respective areas.

A group of Congolese evangelists joined the Sudanese graduates namely Simeona Nzia, Motezella Mesa and Enocha Loja. Since the centres at Katire Gilo and Parajok were already well established the new graduates were sent to work in smaller centres. Thomas Lohima went to Lohutok while Andrea Vuni and Nikolao Oling went to Opari. Martin Achaia went to Pajok. The first graduate Primon Hakim went to Katire Ayom and the Congolese evangelist Simeona worked mainly in Torit. His compatriot Motezella visited different areas (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

An AIM-school was opened in Nakanigwa in Opari and Andrea Vuni was tasked to be the headmaster. Angelo Geri who at present is a pastor in AIC and member of Open Doors remembers that his father also taught in this school (Interview with Reverend Angelo Geri: 17 July 2006).

The Congo influence on church music had a definite impact on AIM's mission work in Sudan. In later years it would play a vital role in the youth movement that emerged in Juba.

Growing pressure for Sudan's independence made missionaries to realize how urgent a goal it was to prepare Southerners for the time ahead. One of their main aims was to establish a Sudanese leadership that would be able to run the work started in a self-sufficient manner. The political climate changed even faster than expected and AIM-missionaries accordingly increased their effort to get a Sudanese leadership in place. In December 1957 the first meeting of the Sudan Council was held, replacing the old missionary council. Andrea Vuni was elected chairman. The Congolese evangelist Motezzela Mesa, also known as Uzele, was the first secretary. In a certain way this event can be described as the "birthday" of the Africa Inland Church. Theoretically full authority of all church affairs was given to the Africa Church Council. In reality however AIM still held the reigns (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

CHAPTER 6

THE GOSPEL IN SUDAN – AN EMERGING INDIGENOUS CHURCH

6.1 Politics, missionaries and the Church

It is important to give a summary of political events since politics have had such a significant impact on the Church in Sudan. After the Second World War winds of change swept through the colonized regions of the world, nationalism was in the air.

James Robertson was the Civil Secretary of Sudan at the time. He called the leaders of Northern and Southern Sudan together at Juba in 1947. The main point of discussion was whether the Southerners wanted their own Council or whether they wanted to join the already existing Northern Legislative Council. Robertson felt that “... the south was ‘inextricably bound for future development to the Middle East and Arabia and Northern Sudan’ and that the southern peoples should therefore ‘be equipped to take their places in the future as socially and economically the equals of their partners of the Northern Sudan.’” (Holt & Daly 1988:153).

Although their first reaction was to form their own Council the mainly illiterate Southern chiefs were persuaded to join the Northern Legislative Council. The Southerners pleaded for a cautious movement towards unity. One of the chiefs, Lolik Lado, compared the South-North relationship to that of a young man and girl who had to study each other carefully before moving into a permanent relationship. He warned, “... a hurried union might result in an unhappy home, likely to break up in a violent divorce” (Alier 2003:35).

From Alier’s perspective the northern representatives touched soft spots of both the Southern delegates and the British authorities during the discussions that followed. They succeeded in swaying key leaders to accept their stance. It resulted in Robertson informing the Southerners of the government’s decision rather than asking them to determine their own future (2003:35).

After the meeting a number of important policies were put in place. The borders between Northern and Southern Sudan were thrown open and religious freedom was proclaimed. “Muslim preachers could move freely to the South to compete with Christian missionaries and leaders of traditional religions” (Alier 2003:35).

Once the matter of unity was settled the British administration put in a late effort to lift the educational and economic level in the South. They opened the Rumbek Secondary School in 1948 and some time later also the Juba Commercial Secondary School. A cotton growing project in Zande-land in Western Equatoria failed to achieve the high goals envisaged. Instead of promoting social and economic stability it “contributed to the mitigation of southern fears of what independence might bring” (Holt & Daly 1988:157).

All the time the process of Sudan becoming an independent nation gained in momentum. By February 1953 all the main political players (except those of the South!) agreed that elections would be held and that self-determination would follow in three years. On 1 January 1956 Sudan received its independence.

For most Southerners the political events developed far too quickly and incomprehensibly. All the unfulfilled promises of the North also made them feel betrayed. In the end they felt their only way of surviving would be to take violent action. This happened on 18 August 1955. Members of 2nd Company of the Equatoria Corps a military unit with Southern soldiers and Northern officers started a mutiny. The mutiny quickly spread to other units and a wholesale massacre of Arabs took place in different parts of Southern Sudan. This included soldiers, merchants, women and children who originated from the North (Werner et al 2000:367-368).

Although the mutiny quickly came to an end it left an indelible mark on all Sudanese. Hasan writes: “Although the revolt was ostensibly caused by political factors, the religious stimulus was at the centre of the matter” (2002:29).

The way the trial of the mutineers was conducted left a bitter taste in the mouths of Southerners for decades to come. From their side Northerners saw this event as the fruit of missionary intentions of separating Northern and Southern Sudanese. Missionaries were

targeted by the Northern press as willing instruments in the hands of the British colonial regime whose desire it was to sabotage Sudanese unity.

In February 1957 Ziada Arbab, the Minister of Education, called a meeting in Khartoum with all the leaders of the different missionary societies. He announced that henceforth the government would take charge of education in the South. Mission schools would be nationalized in phases starting with the village and elementary schools and Vernacular Teacher Training Colleges. Hasan's words years later reflected the hostile feeling Northerners felt toward mission education (2002:28).

Missionaries poisoned the minds of children by teaching them far more about Arab slave traders and scarcely anything about the role of Europeans here in the Sudan and in the Trans-Atlantic flow of African slaves. Doubtless Islam was badly impaired by the 'myth' of the rapacious Arab traders ... [T]he 'myth' is probably the most important single factor that induced the sense of bitterness, hatred and mistrust that clouded the North-South relationship and which has lingered on until today

While the Protestant missions decided not to protest, for various reasons the Catholics took the opposite stance. They protested strongly. Education had been their major evangelism method and they had invested a lot in terms of money, time and staff in this venture. Ziada Arbab did not take kindly to the way the Catholics protested. Even the Protestants did not feel comfortable with their "aggressiveness". Relations between Protestants and Catholics took a turn for the worse due to their different stands and approaches of the nationalized education issue (Werner et al 2000:371-372).

In a short time the village Islamic suq schools replaced schools. Arabic became the language of education and the way pupils could learn this new school language was by attending *khalwas*. The *khalwa* was a school specifically geared at teaching students to memorize the Quran. While the *khalwas* targeted people at primary school level *ma'ahads* were opened as institutes aiming at those on the secondary school level.

In the Sudanese political arena things did not go smoothly and new elections were called in 1958. Since the Catholic priests were the most educated people of the South they were

urged to take part. When they did Father Paolino Doggale and Father Saturnino Lohure won seats in parliament. The latter became leader of the new Federal Party but Northern politicians shattered his dreams of Sudan becoming a federation. He walked out of the Assembly. Alier writes: "By the end of 1958 Southerners either went to jail or chose a life in exile for supporting federal principles" (2003:38).

One of the main dividing points at this time was the role of religion. Whereas many Northern politicians wanted the country to be ruled according to the principles of Islam most of the Southerners opposed the idea in strong terms (Hasan 2002:29-30). Islamic idealism on the one hand and fears of oppression and inferior treatment on the side of Southerners resulted in a political deadlock.

When politicians clearly could not resolve their differences General Abboud and his military supporters stepped in. He took over control of the country in 1958 in a bloodless coup. On 17 November 1958 directly after taking control he addressed the nation over the radio claiming, "... the army had no alternative but to save the country from the chaotic regime of the politicians" (Holt & Daly 1988:171).

Abboud launched an energetic development program and many new schools were built. However the new leader saw missionaries as a security threat. He therefore started a process of expelling them from Sudan. He and his colleagues felt that the missionaries were indeed one of the major negative influences in the South when it came to the topic of Sudanese unity. With their removal he hoped that unity would become much more acceptable to Southerners (Werner et al 2000:374).

The harassment of Christians and the conversion of Equatorian chiefs to Islam became active government projects. One way of persuading the chiefs to become Muslims was by sending them many gifts.

Christians in the South became the target of hostile soldiers and government officials. Some Sudanese believers were severely mistreated while others were instilled with fear through often-repeated threats and rough handling. In February 1960, Friday became the official holiday in South Sudan according to the Muslim view of the week. This replacement of Sunday by Friday angered many Sudanese Christians leading them to organise protests.

They recognized this move as another step to Islamize them. Several of the protesters were arrested and given long prison sentences (Werner et al 2000:375).

On 11 May 1960 the government ordered the closure of all bookshops, printing presses, flour mills and other business enterprises run by mission agencies. Medical, agricultural and building work done by missionaries was severely constrained and the government told them to occupy themselves only with spiritual activities.

In May 1962 the Missionaries Societies Act was published, that placed very strict limits on what missionaries were allowed to do. Every year missionaries had to apply for a licence from the Council of Ministers before they could continue with their programs. Children under the age of eighteen could not receive any religious instruction unless the child's guardian gave written permission in the presence of provincial authorities. The Missionary Societies Act was in essence "... a crude device to allow unlimited interference with missionaries (Holt & Daly 1988:179).

Most of the Protestant missions tried to divert the attention from the national churches by applying for the licence. This attempt failed as will become clear later. SUM decided not to apply for a licence and left Sudan in December 1962. The Roman Catholic Church applied for a licence both for the missionaries and the national Catholic Church (Werner et al 2000:378-379).

Additionally the Catholics expanded their protest through international publications. Bishop Ireneo Dud clearly stated that the Act robbed Sudan of religious freedom and that Christians were actively persecuted for their faith. However all these ways of addressing the problem could not stop the reality that the indigenous Church in Sudan would have to face a difficult future all on its own.

Although the Act was apparently aimed at expatriate missionaries the Arabic wording of the document made the restrictions applicable to the national churches as well. This alienated the churches in a way from the government that eventually led the Sudanese churches to become actively opposed to the North (Werner et al 2000:377).

The government also started to expel missionaries whenever and wherever they could. In 1963 more or less one hundred missionaries were forced to leave the country.

On the political front tension grew daily. The Torit Mutiny was followed with uncoordinated attacks by groups of mutineers. However when the government made it clear that they would continue to Islamize all of Sudan more general resistance grew among Southerners. A political resistance movement, the Sudan African Closed District National Union, was formed in 1962. The founders were Southern politicians who had fled the country and who led the resistance from outside of Sudan. Later on they changed the name to Sudan African National Union (Holt & Daly 1988:179).

Armed resistance also increased and became more organized. In 1963 the Anya-nya rebel movement was formed. Due to the desperation of thousands of Southerners disillusioned with the Northern government the movement grew in strength and in a short time gained control of most of rural Southern Sudan.

Hasan writes: "The strict, harsh policy adopted by the dictatorship, the tough stand of the rebels and the church, and the ensuing brutalities created an irreparable atmosphere of bitterness and mistrust between the two sides" (2002:31).

A surprise attack on Wau was very nearly successful and this caused a lot of uneasiness among government officials and soldiers. Two months later, on 27 February 1964, the government told all the missionaries still left that they had to leave Southern Sudan. The attack of Wau might have been the reason for this final act of hostility against expatriate missionaries in the South. On 8 March the last Protestant and Catholic missionaries had left Southern Sudan. In those final few days 272 Catholics and 62 Protestants were expelled.

To the Catholic Church it was a very heavy blow since in one stroke they lost 70% of their ordained clergy. Nikkel writes: "One indigenous bishop and 28 priests remained to care for 500,000 Catholics" (2001:222). By contrast there were only six CMS missionaries in Southern Sudan at the time. Others were either on furlough or away for other reasons. The twelve mission stations became Anglican parish centres with two Sudanese bishops and 44 ordained clergy to take care of the church members.

With the departure of expatriate missionaries the government turned its attention to local church leaders. In April 1964 General Mohammad Irwa summoned all the Sudanese church leaders to the Army headquarters in Malakal. There he made it clear that the government policy was to Islamize all of Sudan. He then continued with a dark threat that the government take a hard stand against Christian leaders. He made his point clear by saying: "We will deal with you" (Anderson 1998c: 189-190).

Hasan makes the following interesting comment: "The inexperienced military government locked itself into an armed conflict with a very experienced and strong foe: the Church" (2002:32).

The Church in Sudan indeed proved its resilience. Instead of declining, as many expected would be the case there was a remarkable growth in many areas. Anderson writes that the Church "... far from being a pale imitation of missionary models, was fast developing its own life, its own expression of faith, its own evangelists, teachers and pastors, and its own will to survive" (2000:379).

Proving its mettle came at a cost. In August 1964 three SIC church leaders were arrested and killed in Melut (Anderson 1998c: 194-195). Father Barnaba Deng was killed in Wau because he defended civilians who were abused by government troops (Nikkel 2001:223). Other church leaders were killed or tortured. The cost was high but the Church survived and resisted efforts of forcible conversion to Islam.

General Abboud initially enjoyed support but when it became clear that he had no real policy concerning Southern Sudan he fell in disfavour. Riots and mass demonstrations made Khartoum ungovernable. Abboud had no choice but to dissolve the Supreme Council and disband the cabinet. He handed power to Transitional Government on 30 October 1964. Abboud remained president and Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa was elected as prime minister. After only two weeks Abboud was forced to resign as president and a five-man commission took his position as leaders of the country (Daly & Holt 1988:182-183).

Clement Mboro a Catholic and senior Southern civil servant replaced General Mohammad Irwa as Minister of the Interior. Unfortunately a misunderstanding concerning Mboro's arrival in Khartoum led to violent action from frustrated Southerners on 6 December 1964.

In the backlash coming from angry Northerners the compound of the American Mission was attacked and burnt to the ground. Both the Catholic Comboni College and the mission compound in Khartoum North came under attack as well. (Werner et al 2000:400-401).

The press launched scathing attacks on missionaries and other Westerners in Khartoum labelling them as foreign hands stained with blood. Between three and four hundred people died on the second day of the riots and thousands were injured. Most of the casualties were Southerners. When peace was finally restored many left the capital to join the Anyanya rebel movement.

Sudanese church leaders and expatriate missionaries realized the need for the Sudanese Churches to speak with one united voice to the government. They realized there was no space for internal strife and divisions. Protestants and Catholics came together and formed the Sudan Council of Churches on 29 January 1965. Wheeler observed the uniqueness of the inclusion of the Roman Catholic Church as a full participating member from the very beginning of the Council: "This was unprecedented in the ecumenical movement at that time" (2000:452).

On a political level Sirr al-Khatim realized he had to try reconciling the North and South. A conference was called with representatives from all the Sudanese sides as well as observers from other African countries. An unfortunate remark from a Northern Delegate not meant for public hearing exposed the feeling many Northern politicians still had concerning missionaries. As the Southern delegates entered the conference hall one of them heard how someone said: "Here come the children of the missionaries!" (Werner et al 2000:406).

Unfortunately the Southern politicians contributed to the problems. They became deeply divided among themselves. Power struggles in the end prevented them from making any significant contribution when it was sorely needed (Alier 2003:42).

In April 1965 elections were held and Mohammad Ahmed Mahjoub became the new president of Sudan. He and his government received the authority to "restore law and order" in the South of Sudan and security forces were given a "... 'free hand' to act in pursuit of that goal" (Alier 2003:48).

The two main groups targeted by the government were the Anya-nya fighters and the Southern intelligentsia who still lived in Sudan. Making full use of the free hand given to them government soldiers went on the rampage. They burnt down many village schools and churches at the same time driving the civil population from their homes.

At first the government did not treat the Dinka in the same brutal way than other Southerners because they were wary of their numbers. From their side the Dinka became increasingly discontent with the government and their educated elite led them to identify more and more with the broadly based opposition in the South (Nikkel 2001:221). The government retaliated by forcefully acting against Dinkas who were perceived as a threat.

On 8 and 9 July 1965 at least one thousand people were massacred in Juba. On 11 July more or less a hundred people were killed in Wau. Several of them were leading Southerners. (Werner et al 2000:407). Alier placed the number of people killed both in Juba and Wau at 473 (2003:48).

In that same time an attempt was made on the life of Bishop Ireneo Dud who visited the Catholic Seminary not far from Juba. On 23 July the Catholic priest in charge of the parishes at Aweil, Nyamlel and Gordhiim was killed during a visit in Wau. The attacks continued and in July Father Archangelo Ali was killed in Rumbek. Government soldiers then proceeded to Akot where they burnt down the ECS church and killed several people. In August Bishop Gwynne College was attacked but only one person was killed because most of the students and staff were already sent away. It is relatively certain that Bishop Elinana Ngalamu was the attackers' main target.

All this violence led to a massive exodus of civilians. According to some sources nearly a million people fled deep into the bush or went as refugees to neighbouring countries (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:28). Bishop Allison suggested that up to two million people could have been internally displaced (Werner et al 2000:410). Villages became deserted places and the numbers of civilians in towns fell dramatically. Communities who retreated far from any government-controlled roads became completely isolated. Whole new villages were established in the safety of previously uninhabited bush and the Christians among them started new "bush churches".

Most church leaders became separated from their flocks. They had to flee for their lives to neighbouring countries or saw the necessity of establishing contact with the outside world. Some had already made arrangements for further studies. The absence of ordained leaders did not lead to the destruction of the Church. Instead mass movements led by lay leaders brought new vitality. It was in this crucial period that the church became the dominant social and religious force in large parts of Southern Sudan.

Christians in Africa became aware of the crisis and decided to act. From 5 to 15 December 1966 four delegates of the All Africa Conference of Churches visited Sudan on a goodwill mission. Two reasons for this visit had been the expulsion of all missionaries from Southern Sudan and the 1965-massacres in the South. Although their intent was good these delegates clearly did not understand the dynamics between the North and the South too well. They accepted and condoned many ideas of the Sudan government while at the same time criticising the Southern Anya-nya movement. In the end the “goodwill mission” resulted in feelings of betrayal on the side of many Southern leaders including church leaders (Werner et al 2000:434-436).

Many Southerners mistrusted the AACC for a long time. It was a sad outcome for an organization that wanted to promote unity in Africa and between Africans. One positive outcome was that the Sudan government would allow missionaries from African countries to work in Southern Sudan. The only prerequisite was that they had to be recommended by the AACC.

On 25 May 1969 a second military coup took place. Jaafer Mohammad Numeiri and other junior army officers seized power and renamed the country as the Democratic Republic of the Sudan. At first they had to secure their position by attacking the Ansar sect who threatened their position in 1970. As many as 12,000 Ansar were killed in the short but violent confrontation (Holt & Daly 1988:196). Shortly thereafter they also acted with a heavy hand against the Communist Party after communist members in the army attempted a coup. Numeiri was then elected as president.

An event with definite religious connotations again brought Sudan to the attention of the wider world. In July 1970 more than fifty “revival” Christians were massacred by government troops close to the Sudan-Congo border. The news leaked to the international

community and had a great influence on how the international public viewed Sudan. It wasn't only countries abroad that showed renewed interest in Sudan but also some of her neighbours. Uganda in particular became actively involved in building contact with Southern Sudanese. This contact led to support, mostly on the spiritual and relief level (Werner et al 2000:436-437).

Numeiri and his government experienced increasing pressure and began a series of secret meetings with southern leaders in exile. Eventually it led to the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement (Holt & Daly 1988:201).

Even here the Church played an important role. The All Africa Conference of Churches, World Council of Churches and a delegation of Roman Catholic representatives acted as mediators accepted by both groups. Abel Alier was appointed Minister of Southern Affairs in the Sudan government in August 1971. He travelled to Europe in this capacity and made appeals to several churches and Christian organisations. He felt it was crucial to meet with these church bodies "... in view of their work among Southern refugees and political leaders in exile" (Alier 2003:91). Alier also understood the enormous influence the WCC enjoyed in countries that were neighbours to Sudan.

Samuel Bwogo who was the Secretary of the Sudan Council of Churches contacted Alier and suggested that a church delegation had to be brought to Khartoum to explore possible cooperation with the government. A week later representatives of WCC and AACC arrived in Khartoum (Alier 2003:92).

Burgess Carr who joined the delegation at a later stage was the AACC's general secretary and his personal charisma and efforts helped to speed up the peace process. Alier was a committed Christian and with Carr he played a vital role in establishing peace. Representatives of North and South Sudan gathered in Addis Ababa to start peace talks and on 27 March 1972 both sides finally accepted the peace agreement. The Agreement "... opened a period of hope for peace and development" (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:29).

For eleven years a fragile peace existed. Several education programs on the primary and secondary level as well as primary health care projects were developed. Theological

training institutes were established and church buildings were erected. Many Southerners returned to their villages and life became fairly normal again.

However Numeiri came under severe pressure from the very moment the peace agreement was signed. The Muslim Brotherhood under Hassan al Turabi gained in popularity and Islamic influence was further strengthened by the return of Sadiq al Mahdi in 1977. All these Muslim leaders wanted the Islamic position to be strengthened and the concessions made to the South to be withdrawn (Werner et al 2000:513).

Two economic projects brought further tension namely the digging of the Jonglei Canal and the opening up of oil fields.

The idea of digging the Jonglei Canal was to prevent the massive loss of water through evaporation and the supplying of water for agricultural projects in Egypt and North Sudan. Southern Sudanese were divided on this project. Many felt it would lead to irreparable ecological changes especially in rainfall patterns. This would affect their pastoral economy dramatically. Others felt that the South could actually benefit from such a project. In the end the project was approved and digging started in 1978. Rumours about two million Egyptian peasants who would come to the South under the protection of Egyptian soldiers and of how the whole Sudd would be drained of all its water led to widespread riots (Alier 2003:241-242). The whole project eventually came to a standstill in 1984 when rebels made further work impossible (Werner et al 2000:513-514).

Even more damaging to the fragile peace was the discovery of oil by Chevron Oil Company near Bentiu in 1978. The government first tried to hide the discovery while an attempt was made to redraw the Sudan map. According to the new borders the oil would fall in the newly created Unity Province. Southern politicians thwarted this effort. The government announced that an oil refinery would be constructed in Kosti and not in the south where the oil was discovered. Dissatisfaction increased when Southerners realized they may reap no benefits from the oil coming from their part of the country (Holt & Daly 1988:204).

Insecurity became a daily reality and in 1982 Baggara militia entered Western Upper Nile with the sole purposes of intimidation and the extension of Northern influence in the area.

This led many young Nuer men to go to Ethiopia. There they received training in the Anya-nya II movement that started to organise resistance against the government.

Tension mounted not only between Northerners and Southerners but also between different Southern political leaders and their followers. Archbishop Elinana Ngalamu of ECS and Archbishop Ireneo Dud of RCC gave clear warnings and prophetic guidance to their communities. Ngalamu's stand cost him dearly in terms of Equatorian support (Werner et al 2000:516).

All the friction had to lead to violence. On 16 May 1983 the inevitable happened. Battalion 105 comprised of Southern soldiers. They had not received their salaries worth 107, 000 Sudanese Pounds for the month of April. A committee went to Juba to present the case to the authorities. One delegate said: "... if the salaries were not paid, things could get out of hand and the government would be bound to spend 107 millions pounds and more in a feverish effort to bring what could be a wide-ranging rebellion to an end" (Alier 2003:285).

Instead of listening to the pleas of the delegates the authorities planned to attack the unpaid soldiers in their headquarters. Several army units attacked the headquarters situated in Bor and Pibor simultaneously at sunrise on 16 May 1983. Fierce fighting broke out in Bor. The next day at dawn the whole battalion moved out of town and started their journey to Ethiopia where they joined the Anya-nya II movement. Garrisons from Pibor and Pachalla followed suit (Alier 2003:285).

John Garang de Mabior, a colonel in the government army, was on leave in the Bor area at the time of the attack. He decided to desert and joined the rebels. These events can be seen as the beginning of a new civil war.

On 5 June 1983 Numeiri abolished the Addis Ababa Agreement and divided the South into three regions. He also abolished the Regional Self-Government Act thereby effectively taking all real control out of the hands of southern politicians. In September he imposed *Shari'a* law on all Sudanese. Through this latter act he lost all credibility in the eyes of Southerners. Church leaders from different denominations took action by sending a letter to the president. In the letter they protested against the imposing of Islamic Law on Christians (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:30).

Rebel leaders met in Ethiopia in July 1983 and formed the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). However a number of Anya-nya II leaders did not want to accept the Dinka-domination and agenda of the new movement. This led to vicious fighting between the newly formed SPLA and those who refused to join it. When it became clear that they could not defeat the SPLA the Anya-nya II members turned to the Sudan government for help. The government supplied them with arms leading to many fights between different Southern factions.

At first the SPLA made itself known as a Marxist movement with a radical agenda of bringing social and economic justice to all marginalized peoples. Part of this stance was the acceptance of atheism. Few church leaders also felt that they could justify participation of Christians in the armed struggle in the early years of the war. This obviously brought tension between the SPLA and the Church (Werner et al 2000:524-525).

Those in the SPLA who saw the Church as a relic from colonial times harassed Church leaders who were always sympathetic to the liberation struggle. Armed raids by SPLA-fighters from Bahr al Ghazal and the Jonglei Province into Eastern and Western Equatoria alienated many people from the new movement. Church leaders and Christians were caught up between a national Islam-government, puppet regional governments and radical SPLA-rebels, and they felt uncomfortable and alienated from all three these groups (Werner et al 2000:523-524).

For the first three years the war was rather low-key consisting of random guerrilla attacks on roads, vehicles and police stations. However in 1987 matters worsened into a large-scale human tragedy. The government supplied groups that did not support the SPLA with arms. These groups included the Toposa and Mandari tribes, and the Nuer-dominated Anya-nya II movement.

They also armed several Baggara tribes and gave them freedom to raid. These Baggara raiders destroyed many villages and thousands of Dinka villagers in Bahr al Ghazal were killed. With their villages and crops destroyed and their cattle killed or raided, tens of thousands of Dinkas fled to towns and cities in Sudan and especially to refugee camps in Ethiopia. About thirty thousand boys many under the age of ten took part in this desperate journey. Many of them had to trek up to 400 miles in order to reach relative safety.

Thousands died on these journeys. It is estimated that more than 250 000 Southerners died between 1987 and 1988. (Werner et al 2000:525).

When the conflict between the SPLA and Anya-nya II leaders reached a crisis point the Anya-nya leader Daniel Matthews suddenly decided to join his former archenemies. In 1988 Major General Gordon Kong also joined them with about 70% of the Anya-nya forces. One of the main reasons was that some SPLA members had decided to attend the church that was led by the mother of Major General Kong in Ethiopia. She was impressed by the SPLA Christians and in turn persuaded her son to join hands with his previous enemies (Alier 2003:295).

From 1987 to 1988 Southern Sudan was hit by drought resulting in famine. This forced Southerners who had survived armed attacks from hostile groups to stay in abject poverty in camps around towns like Muglad, Aweil, Malakal and Aweil. More than a million refugees also lived in the worst conditions imaginable on the outskirts of Khartoum in so-called peace camps.

Surprisingly the outside world knew very little about this human tragedy. It was only in August 1988 that journalists 'discovered' this hidden war while covering another natural disaster in Khartoum. Photos and reports by these journalists shocked the world into action, resulting in the establishment of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) by the UN in 1989. The goal of OLS was to supply relief to Southerners and one of their methods was food drops by Hercules aeroplanes. Around 100,000 tons of food was moved into Sudan (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Civil_War, 6 September 2006)

On 25 February 1989 the Catholic Bishops of Sudan wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister. In it they lamented the war induced famine and its effect on thousands of people.

We have seen with our own eyes the famine inflicted on large segments of our fellow citizens due to the war. We hear with our own ears the many cries of the poor and displaced in all parts of our country. In greater Khartoum itself, with it's over one million displaced, in Juba with over two hundred thousand, in Malakal with over one hundred thousand. The memories of those hundreds and thousands who have died of famine in

and around Wau, Abiyei, Aweil, Torit and other areas of the South continue to haunt us. The war that brings such famine and suffering must stop

(Diocese of Rumbek 2001:103)

There were indications that the government considered peace talks. However it came to nothing when a military coup toppled the government of Numeiri on 30 June 1989. Lieutenant General Omer al-Bashir became the new leader of the country. He was closely associated with the National Islamic Front and its leader, Hassan al-Turabi. Instead of seeking peace they resolved to promote the Islamization of all Sudanese even more aggressively. The war continued (Werner et al 2000:526).

The new government's stance made the Church's position clear. Church leaders and members started to openly side with the SPLA, freely using terms like 'liberation'. The SPLA took control of large parts of Western Equatoria. This brought new stability in the 'liberated areas' with obvious benefit to the Church as well.

Renewed contact with the outside world opened up with the establishment of OLS. Non-governmental agencies (NGO's) brought in relief support. These NGO's also started health and education projects and helped with leadership development through their training programs.

In Ethiopia's large refugee camps Southerners were open to the gospel with its message of hope. Between 1986 and 1989 it is estimated that up to 400 000 refugees stayed in the camps of Itang, Panyido and Dima (Werner et al 2000:528).

On the one hand these young people became the focus of the SPLA. They realized that if they could train these young men well and gain their complete loyalty they would become a formidable military force. Thousands of them indeed became SPLA-soldiers in what was known as the Red Army.

On the other hand churches and Christian agencies put in a lot of effort to give these destitute young people a chance to receive education and spiritual instruction. A need for

hope made the refugees receptive to the gospel message. Youth groups were formed and thousands of new converts were made. Hundreds of new believers were baptized at regularly held baptismal services. It was especially PCOS and ECS that experienced tremendous numerical growth through converts made in the refugee camps (Werner et al 2000:529).

Once a month believers from these two denominations would go to some hills close to Itang to pray and fast. Places of worship were constructed and in Itang alone there were several prayer centres in addition to eight large church buildings.

A sense of unity between believers from different denominations grew from their common experiences in suffering. ECS members would at times worship with the Presbyterians and in 1988 members of different denominations constructed a large grass-roofed church for use by all the denominations. Catholics and Protestants also mixed freely. Wheeler observes "Without the controlling presence either of missionaries, or of senior church leadership, a richer, and largely unconscious engagement with traditional religious practice and experience took place" (2000:531).

Six denominations were represented in the Ethiopian refugee camps. When requests came in 1989 from donor agencies that one church body should be organized to simplify administration and relief logistics senior leaders came together and discussed the formation of a 'New' Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). John Garang leader of the SPLA approved and on 17 January 1990 the SPLA radio service officially announced the founding of this ecumenical body. In the beginning NSCC's primary aim was to provide "... both material and spiritual support to the people of the Southern Sudan who have been impoverished through the war in the country" (Ga-Aro 1999:171).

The proposal of making Bishop Paride Taban (RCC) and Bishop Nathaniel Garang (ECS) the leaders of this new organisation was approved without consulting them. At first they were unhappy about the name and way things were done, but after some discussions they accepted to give NSCC their full support. Bishop Taban became the first chairman with Bishop Garang serving as his deputy. NSCC had its headquarters in Torit until 1992 when government forces captured the town.

At first the SPLA wanted NSCC to be seen as the movement's spiritual wing. Church leaders saw that this could easily compromise the Church to be involved in activities they might otherwise not have approved of. They therefore pushed for NSCC to have its own independent nature. After some friction with SPLA leaders the independence of NSCC with its own moral and prophetic voice was accepted (Werner et al 2000:533).

Another important relationship resulted from the contact between the churches and the SPLA in the camps. Many of the boys who came to the Ethiopian refugee camps were too young to be trained as SPLA-soldiers. SPLA-leaders decided to involve the movement in educating these boys. Their cooperation with the churches in education broke down a lot of previously existing mistrust.

In May 1991 an event took place that caused further trauma to thousands of Southern Sudanese. Mengistu, the Marxist leader of Ethiopia, was overthrown. The new leaders were not sympathetic to the SPLA and all the refugees were forcibly removed from Ethiopia in June. During this eviction hundreds of fleeing Southerners died as they tried to cross flooded rivers. Others died of sickness and starvation. Thousands of refugees returned to their home areas taking the gospel with them. Many joined the SPLA and brought a vital Christian presence into the movement.

Thousands of young boys who lost everything at home decided to stay together and go to Kenya. They began a long and dangerous journey to Kakuma refugee camp, arriving in July 1992. Twelve thousand of them eventually became the core of a strong Christian community there. From this group many zealous evangelists later went to Bor and northern Bahr al Ghazal (Werner et al 2000:534).

While all these traumatic events brought many young Southerners to accept Christianity it led many others to become cynical and violent. Wheeler writes: "Those who had never embraced Christian faith had nothing but the de-socializing and traumatizing training in violence and brutality they had received in the SPLA in Ethiopia on which to fall back" (2000:535).

With the fall of the Ethiopian leader Mengistu the SPLA let go of their Marxist aspirations. They adopted an ideology that was much more acceptable to the majority of Southerners,

thereby gaining in influence and popularity. The Church also showed a willingness to join the struggle for liberation when the SPLA moved away from their Marxist roots.

Apart from their internal problems Sudan entered the scene of world politics. Sudan's government welcomed and sheltered Osama bin Laden in 1991. Shortly thereafter they supported Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War. America reacted by putting Sudan on their blacklist ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Civil_War) 25 August 2006). In later years Bashir's hosting of bin Laden brought Sudan in America's focus when they declared war on terrorism. The resulting pressure was one of the reasons why Bashir's regime agreed to go to the negotiation table.

In the South the different rebel forces also lost the sympathy of many through their constant in-fighting. Apart from the SPLA several other rebel factions were formed. Fighting between these factions claimed the lives of thousands of civilians and destroyed their credibility in the eyes of the West.

Some of the worst faction fighting took place along tribal lines. In 1991 a split in the ranks of the SPLA resulted in untold misery to thousands of civilians. On 28 August 1991 three Nuer commanders in the SPLA attempted to overthrow John Garang. Their attempt failed. Led by Riak Machar the dissatisfied commanders then left the SPLA and formed their own military faction. The split had tribal undertones and most Nuer defected with their leaders. In October and November of the same year Nuer soldiers and civilians attacked the Bor Dinka with extreme ferociousness. Thousands of people were killed and many more fled their homeland. This event made the Bor Dinka reject their traditional gods and turn to Christianity en masse (Werner et al 2000:546-547).

In 1993 Omar al Bashir's government removed all non-Muslim judges from Southern Sudan. Muslim judges replaced them. At the same time the Public Order Police was introduced. Their main task was to enforce Sharia Law. Many Southerners who lived in the North were arrested and punished. Even non-Muslim Northerners had to endure harsh treatment ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Civil_War) 25 August 2006).

In 1995 opposition against the government increased. The National Democratic Alliance was formed to serve as an umbrella for several anti-government parties. Parties belonging

to NDA changed the dynamic of the civil war. It "... opened a north-eastern front to the civil war, making it more than before a centre-periphery rather than simply a north-south conflict" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Civil_War 25 August 2006).

As the war dragged on leaders of several East African countries tried to initiate peace talks. They were not very successful but military successes of the SPLA in 1997 led the government to sign a document that opened the way for negotiations. The government also signed agreements with other rebel factions notably with the South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) led by Dr Riek Machar. The Khartoum Peace Agreement forced the ruling National Islamic Front to adopt a democratic constitution and offered self-determination to the South. After the signing of this agreement the SSIM was renamed and became the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF).

Stalling tactics of the government dashed the high hopes of Machar and his followers. They realized that the agreement of self-determination was an empty promise. In 2000 they defected from the government and returned to the bush. About two years later Machar brought his movement back to the folds of the SPLA/M. The reunion strengthened the SPLA/M and weakened the government that already had to handle pressures from countries like America. The American government accused the Sudanese government of genocide in October 2002 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Civil_War 6 September 2006)

Fighting between the government forces and SPLA-soldiers decreased in 2003 and 2004 as peace talks made slow progress. On 9 January 2005 a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was finally signed bringing Africa's longest civil war to an end.

There are a number of key components in the CPA. The South will have autonomy for six years after which a referendum will be held. Referendum results will then determine if the South will separate from the North thereby becoming an independent country or if Sudan will remain one country keeping its present borders. Armed forces will be merged into a force of 39,000 members should Sudan remain one country. Oil revenues will be shared equally between the North and the South. The North will still be ruled according to Sharia Law while the use of Islamic Law in the South will depend on the outcome of the

referendum and elections (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Civil_War 6 September 2006).

6.2 Missionaries and local evangelists

“The Church in Sudan has not been formed by missionary endeavour and proclamation, but by rural evangelists with minimal education (in the western sense of that word) preaching an inculturated message conveyed in a vernacular language rooted in vernacular translations of portions of the Bible” (Wheeler 1998a: 62).

Missionaries played an important role in bringing Christianity to Sudan. Their contribution must not be overestimated though since they were always small in numbers and thinly spread out. They focused their energy on key institutions while Sudanese evangelists took the gospel to villages and isolated rural communities. The general remark of Lamin Sanneh concerning the rooting of Christianity in Africa is specifically true in Sudan: “Missionaries may be one step ahead in the historical transmission of Christianity with Africans serving as secondary agents, but in the process of local assimilation Africans were to the fore, with missionaries now in a reverse position, overwhelmingly inferior in the local adaptation of a religion they helped to introduce” (1983:166).

With independence looming on the horizon it became clear that the era of missionaries was over. Expatriates were forced to hand over control to local church leaders. Several Westerners were pessimistic about the survival of the Sudanese Church under local leadership. History however proved that their doubts of Sudanese Christians’ ability to survive and even thrive were wrong. In the following section we shall see how a local Sudanese Church emerged often in unexpected ways.

6.3 Roman Catholic Church

6.3.1 Mission expansion in Southern Sudan through the work of Sudanese Catholics

From the very beginning of the Catholic mission in Eastern Equatoria, Sudanese were involved in establishing the work. Sudanese and Ugandan catechists also opened

Catholic centres in places not accessible to the Italian missionaries due to the Spheres System. This was particularly true in Western Equatoria. Good examples were the centres opened at Lutaya and Ligo just outside of Yei. Simona Jawu a catechist belonging to the local Kakwa tribe started a Catholic centre at the former place while some young men who were trained in Uganda opened another one at the latter (Werner et al 2000:281-282).

6.3.2 The first Sudanese priests and the founding of Sudanese orders

In 1947 it became clear that Sudan would become independent within a few years. Catholic missionaries had to take a fresh look at the catechism they had used for so many years. They reduced it greatly in terms of content, focusing only on essential doctrines and knowledge of the formal prayers. Another area that received renewed attention was the establishing of local leaders.

Even before the challenge of independence the RCC began the process of ordaining Sudanese priests. The indigenizing process was slow, but a start had been made in 1944 when the first three Sudanese Catholics were ordained. Two of the priests, Tarcisio Lado and Guido Akou, came from Eastern Equatoria. Ireneo Dud came from Bahr al Ghazal. In 1946 four more Sudanese were ordained. One of them was the well-known Satumino Lohure (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:25). Ireneo Dud eventually became the first Sudanese Catholic bishop and later the first Sudanese archbishop. In 1957 Salvatore Atak became the first Dinka priest to receive ordination.

Celibacy also proved to be a stumbling block for many Sudanese Christians in pursuing a full-time ministry. To remain unmarried for all your life was a totally foreign concept in Africa, but the RCC leadership in Rome would not relent. This made the priesthood a difficult and unpopular choice for devout young Catholic men.

The relationship between the expatriate missionaries and Sudanese priests was not very good. Anderson quoted a Sudanese priest's words: "At best they (the Verona Fathers) were paternalistic in dealing with the Sudanese people, and, at worst, they were condescending and arrogant" (2000:360-361). The crisis of bad relationships grew and the way the RCC tried to solve this problem was to create a new Vicariate in Rumbek that

had only Sudanese leaders. Ireneo Dud became its first bishop (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:25).

Impending independence and tensions with Sudanese church leaders forced missionaries to review their assumptions about Sudanese culture. One of the struggles was how to view the baptism (or non-baptism) of polygamist believers. In the mid-sixties the Catholic Church with a Sudanese leadership allowed priests to baptize polygamist men without forcing them to divorce all their wives except their “true wife”. The baptized polygamists were urged not to have sexual relationships with more than one wife.

Bishop Mazoldi was an expatriate missionary who had the insight that believers who did not want to or could not become priests could still serve the RCC in a valuable way. He organized a Sudanese Order of Brothers in 1952 in Eastern Equatoria and called it the Society of Saint Martin of Porres. Already in 1942 a similar Order for sisters had been established (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:25).

RCC Orders in Sudan did all kinds of practical services and proved to be of great value to the RCC. The Saint Joseph Brothers and Sisters of Nazareth were two other Orders started in Bahr al Ghazal. They were not as successful as the ones in Eastern Equatoria.

6.3.3 The role of catechists and evangelists

The importance of women was also appreciated more and more in Catholic missionary circles. One young Sudanese woman Lina Madikoto grew up in an environment where she “... became even more aware of the great dignity of the woman and of the enormous potentiality that was inside her to contribute to a positive growth in society and in the church” (Pierli & Ratti 1998:119).

Lina made her main contribution to evangelization and teaching in the Raga area. She integrated faith and life in a successful way and taught with word and deed “... to become disciples of Jesus Christ meant, first and foremost, to take time for those who were less fortunate in society and were despised by the more powerful of the tribe” (Pierli & Ratti 1998:120). Her way of approaching resistant people with the gospel often resulted in them joining catechism classes.

Unfortunately Lina died in 1955 while giving birth to her second baby. At her funeral Sudanese Christians chanted: “You were coming in our homes and kept telling us to go with you for the lesson. You shared with us the good things of the church. Now that you had gone from us, we promise you that we shall do what you taught us. We shall come, we shall come...” (Pierli & Ratti 1998:121).

With the expulsion of all missionaries in March 1964 Catholic believers in Southern Sudan suddenly had to grapple with the reality of a huge hole in their leadership structure. In the last ten days alone 272 expatriate missionaries were forced to leave. The Rumbek Vicariate had a strong Sudanese leadership, but nearly all the other 52 mission stations in the South were closed. One bishop, one Administrator Apostolic and twenty-eight priests now had to take care of about 500 000 Catholics (Werner et al 2000:392).

Many missionaries foresaw a bleak future for the RCC. The local Sudanese leaders did not always share their pessimism. In Malakal, for instance, Pio Yukwan who had been appointed Pro-Prefect “... rather than catching the despair of the departing missionaries, seems to have relished his freedom of action, and the challenge of developing church life throughout the prefecture” (Werner et al 2000:418). Yukwan and his evangelists were indeed very active. Their efforts were strengthened by the return of baptised Catholics from Khartoum. New chapels were built and the work expanded. In his 1965-report on the situation in his prefecture Yukwan could paint a positive picture of new growth and interest in the Church.

The RCC was fortunate to have an effective “army” of catechists as well. They had already taken over many church responsibilities since the Missionaries Societies Act severely curtailed the activities of expatriates. Before his departure Bishop Mazzoldi authorised the catechists working in his area to conduct baptisms and marriages. They took up their new responsibilities with enthusiasm. In the end they proved that local leaders in fact had more influence on the population than what the missionaries had before them.

Life, however, was by no means easy. After independence the hostility against Sudanese believers increased. At Deim Zubeir the retired evangelist Baptist Mufighi was suspected of having links with the Anya-nya freedom fighters. His reputation made him a respected

person among his own people and a possible threat for government soldiers (Werner et al 2000:398).

Baptist Mufighi worked in the area for more than fifty years and was actually the driving force behind all early activities in the area. He was not afraid of standing up for his beliefs. Early in his ministry Mufighi experienced opposition from the strong Muslim community in Deim Zubeir but was not frightened by the threats he had received. A certain Taaban ordered the closure of the missionary school and the return of all pupils to their villages. Mufighi refused and said: "If the students deserve imprisonment, then I too deserve it and I will walk first in front of them if that be the case" (quoted by Pierli 1998:216).

During his long ministry Mufighi used the well-attended Christmas celebrations as opportunities for evangelism. Many non-Christians would attend these festive meetings and Mufighi wasted no time in sharing the gospel with them.

With this background in mind it is not surprising that government officials in 1964 did not like the popularity he still enjoyed. They resented the fact that he was being recognized as a community leader. As tension mounted Mufighi called a meeting for the Christians in town. He encouraged them to stand strong in spite of the many dangers ahead of them. He also gave them instructions on how to manage the church in case he could no longer do it. One day later he was arrested. On 18 February 1964 his dead body was thrown in the police courtyard. Only a few days later the Catholic missionaries were expelled (Pierli 1998:218-219).

The unchecked violence by government troops in 1965 led to a mass exodus that took whole communities deep into the bush. There, faithful church leaders continued ministering to their people. In the Yambio District of Zandeland a zealous evangelist by the name of Erowa established many new churches during his relentless travels. In later years the strong Catholic Church in the Yambio area was accredited to his hard work (Werner et al 2000:414).

Nuer Catholics who had returned from the North played an important role in bringing the Catholic faith to Upper Nile. Years before hundreds of Nuer men and women from the Upper Nile region went to the Three Towns of Khartoum, Khartoum North and

Omdurman. There they found a safe haven in the church initiated clubs. The club started by Michele Sergi was especially successful. A significant Catholic Nuer community was established through the activities presented at the clubs. Eventually many of the Catholic Nuer returned to their home areas where they had a real impact.

While in Khartoum several Nuer catechists received theological training. Sudanese catechists like Yuannis Tai, Yuannis Oth, Yuannis Toang and others did the training. One of the Nuer who received training in Khartoum was James Duol Kai. He returned to Adok in 1972 and gathered his wife and family in his house for prayer meetings. When more Catholic Nuer returned from Khartoum a small church was established. Kai became the leader and proved to be a zealous missionary teacher. He trained his most promising converts as catechists and sent them out to establish new churches. By the time of his death in 1991 there were at least 120 Catholic churches in the wider area around Adok (Wheeler 1998c: 168).

Father Zachary Bol Chatim was the first Nuer Catholic priest. He played a big role in breaking through the resistance the Western Nuer had against the gospel. Working in Bentiu he also established rural chapels in the area around the strategic town. His personal charisma, desire to serve and willingness to sacrifice made him a well-loved person (Werner et al 2000:473-474).

It was not only in new areas that Catholic growth took place. In Northern Bahr al Ghazal, which was a traditional Catholic stronghold, Dinka traders established new prayer centres. They were converted in Khartoum and desired to share their faith in their home areas. The trader-evangelists filled the gap left by the expulsion of missionaries in 1964 (Nikkel 2001:230-231).

6.3.4 Developments in the RCC from the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement onwards

The Sphere System that was developed under colonial rule could not be maintained during the war years. After the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement in 1972, thousands of refugees returned to their home areas. They took their faith back with them. Sudanese Christians at the time were not as protective of their own denominational areas

as was the case when missionaries were in control. Many Catholic converts returned to areas that previously fell outside areas where Catholic missionaries could work. In this way a strong Catholic community was established in the traditionally ECS area of Yei (Werner et al 2000:474).

Relative peace lasted from 1972 to 1983 in Southern Sudan. It brought about many new activities. In September 1972 Sudan Aid was started as the RCC's official aid and development organisation. The Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference was also organised in 1976 (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:29-30). Theological training was conducted inside Southern Sudan. The St Paul's Major Seminary was opened near Wau in 1975 and it served as the national training centre for the priesthood. In 1984 it was moved to the outskirts of Juba. When civil war broke out again the seminary was again moved, this time to Khartoum (Werner et al 2000:506).

When civil war erupted in 1983 Eastern Equatoria bore the brunt of the violence. The reason was that both the government and the SPLA realized the importance of Juba and the routes connecting it to the rest of Southern Sudan. Many battles took place in strategic towns and areas that would give the victorious forces access to Juba. All the turmoil obviously had an impact on the Church.

In spite of all the chaos Bishop Paride Taban was instrumental in making the Diocese of Torit (DOT) the best organised diocese during the war years. His visionary leadership and contact with the international Christian community as chairman of NSCC brought many Catholic expatriates to the diocese. It was made all the easier because of its accessibility both from Kenya and Uganda. In 1995 more than half of the population who lived in the area of Taban's diocese claimed to be Catholics (Werner et al 2000:577).

Although many expatriates visited the area it was still untrained lay people that played the major leadership role in the DOT. Bishop Taban was not only interested in his own diocese. He showed real concern for unevangelized areas and took oversight of the Diocese of Upper Nile whose bishop was prevented from visiting his area. Taban also gave guidance to Joseph Pal who did evangelistic work amongst the Nuer.

Civil war and the resulting exodus of thousands of people to refugee camps in neighbouring countries affected everybody. It made many people receptive for change. Joseph Pal Mut was a catechist who first worked in the Itang refugee camp in Ethiopia and then went to Torit in Eastern Equatoria for further training. He was instrumental in the amazing church growth that took place in 1991-1992 in Eastern Upper Nile.

For about 18 months Pal Mut was at the spearhead of the establishment and organizing of a network of 200 chapels and congregations that stretched all over the region. 200 catechists led the congregations. Father Kizito once asked him how he managed to have such an active ministry over a large area without any special means of transport. "Joseph answered, laughing, and touching his feet, "by using these, they are the only things the Lord has given me!" (Wheeler 1998c: 176).

In many ways the Catholic congregations planted by Pal Mut and his colleagues were very similar to the Presbyterian churches in Nuerland. They used the same Scriptures and Presbyterian hymnbook. The liturgy they used was very Presbyterian.

In 1992 Pal Mut went to Leer where he became head catechist. He saw the need for a priest and started a long journey to Nairobi. A large part of Pal Mut's journey was done on foot. It was a remarkable feat, all the more so because his only motivation was to find a priest for his needy people. He finally arrived in Nairobi in 1993 where his request prompted a group of Catholic fathers to visit Leer. Pal Mut was not always an easy person to work with. He also needed further theological training. A plan was therefore made to send him to Nairobi. In 1996 he died in a car accident bringing his remarkable and controversial ministry to a final end (Wheeler 1998c: 179).

In 1996 Father La Braca went to the area as a Comboni missionary to help with the work. Wheeler comments on the era that passed with the death of Pal Mut and points out that it is "...disappointing to witness indigenous leadership being replaced by a community of expatriate missionaries" (2000:543). However, Wheeler also appreciates the need for an established priesthood in the area and saw the expatriate involvement as a sad but inevitable reality.

All through the war the Catholic leadership used their positions to put pressure on the Sudan government. Their aim was to force the government to recognize the Church and to put in concerted peace efforts. The bishops could not always do much on the ground. In many ways they saw their contribution as being on a higher, more official level. Meeting together inside Sudan was impossible for many years therefore the bishops gathered in Malawi and other African countries to focus their efforts (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:38). They continued writing official letters to the Sudan government as well as open letters to the general public. Meetings were also held with government representatives, leaders of IGAD and other groups. The bishops pleaded repeatedly and eloquently for the war to be brought to an end.

A special pastoral program was launched to bring renewal and to develop spiritual formation in RCC church members. The bishops "... envisioned a just, peaceful and a free country; a country without war, violence, oppression" (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:38). In some ways they became the voice of the thousands of suffering Southerners.

Sudanese bishops were delegated to visit South Africa. The visit formed part of the RCC effort to form a Justice and Peace Commission in Sudan. In response a South African delegation undertook an extensive tour of both north and south Sudan. The South African visit took place in March 2000. Delegates gained valuable information and gave appropriate advice (Diocese of Rumbek 2001:43).

6.4 Protestant Churches

As was mentioned previously the era of missionary control came to an end in 1964. From then onwards the task of leading and building the Church fell on the shoulders of the indigenous leaders. The emergence and development of indigenous Protestant denominations is filled with stories of wonderful commitment but also with the sad results of selfish struggles for power.

Already in 1947 missionaries started to officially recognize indigenous leaders. The Inter-Mission Council was a cooperative body of Protestant missions. It took a necessary step to strengthen the existing unity between denominations. Expatriate leaders of this body

invited the Sudanese churches as authentic bodies with their own authority to select representatives who could meet as an united Sudanese Protestant Council. It led to the first meeting of the Southern Sudan Christian Council in 1948. Missionaries from all the main missions were present but the focus fell on the Sudanese leadership. The Council requested attending churches to be collectively known as The Church of Jesus Christ in the Sudan (Werner et al 2000:355).

Unity between denominations occurred especially in the difficult war years. For the sake of clarity the development of each Protestant denomination in Southern Sudan will be discussed separately. Wherever denominations cooperated on a specific project it will be specifically mentioned. Special attention will also be given to the forming and activities of the Sudan Council of Churches and later the New Sudan Council of Churches.

6.4.1 Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS)

6.4.1.1 The slow emergence of a Sudanese Anglican Church from CMS-work

As missionary work resulted in the establishment of several Sudanese Anglican communities CMS missionaries reflected on the future. Wheeler attributed their desire to establish a strong indigenous church in part to the strategies of Henry Venn and Roland Allen (Kayanga &Wheeler 1999:99).

Sudanese evangelists, lay readers and women's workers were in any case largely responsible for the network of churches and preaching centres in Western Equatoria. The activities of the unsung heroes of Christianity in Sudan were seen as the first step towards building a self-supporting, self-sustaining, self-propagating national Church.

Eventually the need for higher level Sudanese leaders led to the ordination of Daniel Deng Atong and Andrea Apaya as deacons in 1941 (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:100). The process was started that would eventually lead to a fully indigenous Sudanese Anglican Church. A next important step was taken when the Sudanese Anglican community became an independent Diocese of the Anglican Communion in 1945. They still had a British bishop but the recognition received was very important.

After the ordination of Deng Atong and Apaya the question arose on how future pastors had to be trained. Gibson was the missionary who successfully oversaw a work in Yei where evangelists play a very big role (see 5.3.2.3). He proposed that CMS followed the “way of the evangelist”. Gibson’s proposal consisted of a program where evangelists established widespread village ministry. Those who had proven their worth could be ordained as deacons and priests. Bishop Gelsthorpe on the other hand wanted potential candidates to receive a more formal training for at least five years. In 1945 a compromise was reached and Yei Divinity School was established. It catered for both groups of church leaders that needed training (Werner et al 2000:332-333).

Fred Crabb a young missionary with educational experience was placed in charge of the institute. Yei Divinity School functioned on two levels. While appreciating and relying on the many local evangelists and teachers a selected group of leaders received higher theological training. The result was both positive and negative. It succeeded in preparing church leaders for all levels of society but also led to tension between the “educated” priests and “uneducated” evangelists. In later years the tension brought many leadership struggles within the ECS.

Yei Divinity School was relocated to Mori or present day Mundri in 1947. It was also renamed to become the Bishop Gwynne College (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:105). Arthur Reilly succeeded Fred Crabb. When David Brown became the new principal in 1954 he called the college “The Village of God”. He did it to show how much value he placed on learning in community (Werner et al 2000:360). Bishop Gwynne College widened its scope by starting to train teachers of Christian religion for schools as well. Other Protestant churches in Sudan were invited to send staff and students.

Well-trained local leaders would eventually lead to an established local leadership. Recognizing this fact the CMS searched for a Sudanese priest who could be elected as bishop. Their first choice was Andarea Apaya but he declined. Daniel Deng Atong was then approached. He accepted. On 15 May 1955 he was consecrated as the first Sudanese bishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (Kayanga 1998:106).

Deng Atong was a highly effective evangelist but unfortunately he did not make a good bishop. Many factors contributed to it. In 1958 it led to his suspension. Deng Atong’s

failure as a bishop affected all those concerned with the ECS. However, it did not stop the process of establishing a high level indigenous leadership. In 1963 two competent men, Elinana Ngalamu and Yeremia Datio were consecrated as assistant bishops (Werner et al 2000:364). In 1964 when all expatriate missionaries were finally expelled from Southern Sudan there were 57 Sudanese pastors to take care of about 150, 000 Episcopal believers.

With the forming of a new government under Mohammad Ahmed Mahjoub the Church entered a time of great difficulty. Mahjoub was a Muslim hard-liner who took a negative stand against missionaries and those following them. Whole village communities had to flee for their lives as government soldiers aggressively harassed them. Many churches were burnt down. Congregations and their leaders became separated in the chaos. Instead of destroying the Church it resulted in unexpected opportunities for training on the one side and the development of a local lay leadership on the other (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:107-109).

6.4.1.2 The spread of Christianity through the work of local evangelists

Christianity spread throughout Sudan through the ministry of little known believers. Jonathan Mamuru is a good example. He was a member of the marginalized Jur tribe. Mamuru went to school at Lui where he converted to Christianity. After he had returned to his home area Mamuru gathered young people together and shared with them what he learnt from the Bible.

From the very beginning Mamuru encountered strong opposition from his uncle Morojani. In spite of his uncle's disapproval he refused to compromise on his new faith. His sister tried to persuade him to accept the home coming ritual that would involve sacrifices. Instead Mamuru nearly succeeded in converting her to Christianity (Abuyi 1998:129)!

Mamuru taught his young converts Christian songs. Through his testimony and simple teaching ministry a small church was formed. Most of its members were young people. Since Mamuru's uncle prohibited the Christians to gather in his house or anywhere on his land they constructed a small place of worship under a nearby fig tree in "no-man's land".

Marojani was infuriated. He called a meeting of elders and the young leaders of the church were brought before them. The elders insisted that the preaching centre had to be closed but to their amazement the young Christians refused. Two days later double the normal number of people attended the Sunday service.

A few weeks later Marojani brought an accusation against the Christians to the local authorities. The church leaders were called to appear before the court. They were found guilty and received thirty strokes of a cane and a warning not to preach any longer. The young leaders replied that they could not stop doing what they were doing. Their persistence paid off and the authorities left them alone to continue their meetings. In less than two years they planted five churches in the area. Even Marojani could not resist the gospel message any longer. He finally accepted Christ and was baptized (Abuyi 1998:133).

One of the new Jur believers, Samuel Ayoli, was captured by government troops in 1966. The soldiers took him to Mvolo. Mvolo is a key town in Jur country which at the time had a strong Muslim influence. In this unpromising environment Ayoli started a school and a church. He was an energetic evangelist. In 1967 he was ordained as the first Jur pastor (Werner et al 2000:415).

The Jur Church was not without problems. It had to face some serious setbacks. In Kidelo government soldiers killed the pioneer evangelist, Wilson Mapatisi. He was the only evangelist in the village who could read and write. Another key church leader, Yesepa Awule was killed when government forces attacked his village. Other leaders were killed by Anya-nya soldiers who were suspected of working with the government (Abuyi 1998:140). A few evangelists succumbed before pressure or resented the excessive control of church leaders in Mundri. The latter reacted by converting to Islam. Death and defection had a serious impact on the Jur Church.

At this crucial time God sent a revival. In 1989 old and young people received new zeal and preached the gospel everywhere they went. Frederick Amba was a leader in the revival. Soldiers from both the government and SPLA harassed him, but God protected his life time and again (Wheeler 2000:573-574). He preached in all the churches from

Domeri to Mvolo. Traditional shrines and religious artefacts were destroyed and many people accepted Christ (Abuyi 1998:142-144).

Several churches and prayer centres were built in rural Jur areas. In 1993 Reverend Allison Mokison established the Evangelists Training School at Kulu. Mokison was a Moru pastor with a heart for the Jur people. All the support for the centre came from the Jur churches.

In Zande-land two experienced pastors, Andrea Magaya Manguabayoy and Yotoma Girisini remained with their people at a time when many leaders left their congregations. The two pastors continued to serve believers in the bush in the whole Yambio District. They travelled on foot and established many new churches. Their work was so fruitful that the Church became the centre of community life in village upon village. Two more ECS-pastors were sent in 1970 to help with the bush churches (Werner et al 2000:414).

It is important to recognize the role of lay leaders during the difficult war years. Wheeler commented "Lay men and women had led an evangelistic surge that had brought perhaps a majority of rural village people to Christian faith and into the Church" (2000:474). The role of women was significant both in the Church and in family life. They served as role models at home and worked as itinerant evangelists. In this way they shaped ECS theology and the pastoral style of the Church in the two Equatoria provinces.

6.4.1.3 Contact with other countries and new developments

In August 1965 students at Bishop Gwynne College had to flee for their lives because of attacks by government soldiers. The destruction of their place of learning did not quench their desire to be trained. Many of them were accepted by Bishop Tucker Theological College in Uganda and St Paul's United Theological College in Kenya. Other ECS church leaders, notably Nathaniel Garang of Bor studied at a Canadian run Pentecostal Bible School in Nairobi. Still others attended colleges and seminaries of various Christian traditions in East Africa. The training that prospective church leaders received outside of Sudan greatly contributed to their worth as leaders in years to come (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:108).

The ECS church leadership took special care of their members that were scattered as refugees in neighbouring countries. In Uganda ECS enjoyed sincere assistance of the Ugandan Anglican Church. Bishops Elinana Ngalamu and Jeremiah Dotiro succeeded through the close cooperation to place at least one pastor in every settlement for Sudanese refugees in Uganda. The pastors were Sudanese and Ugandans. They received salaries from the Anglican Church of Uganda (Werner et al 2000:421-422).

With the signing of the Peace Agreement people started returning to their home areas. One result was that the Mother's Union again blossomed after a period of relative inactivity. Wearing their traditional white uniforms with blue sashes Christian women gathered for Bible study and practical services. They can rightly be described as the backbone of the Church (Werner et al 2000:490). Through their many activities they kept daily church life active and relevant.

Another interesting development was the emergence of vital young Dinka churches in Khartoum. The churches developed from church clubs, night schools and secondary schools established in Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman. Mark Nikkel writes: "The clubs became the natural route through which young Dinka entered the church in northern towns" (2001:229). Established Sudanese believers were effective in reaching out to newcomers in the city. The Jur leader Reuben Macir was appointed as pastor in Omdurman. He was instrumental in establishing a pioneer Dinka Church there. This church brought hundreds of young people together in an otherwise hostile environment. It resulted in the conversion of many Southerners and the planting of new Dinka congregations.

Reverend John Malou with the assistance of Gabriel Geu brought new direction in 1977. Together they focused on the training of young leaders. A Church Council was formed and 13 committees were elected to take charge of every aspect of church life. Through the committees' practical activities many young Dinka Christians received the opportunity to develop their leadership potential. The results were often dramatic.

Young leaders who continuously developed under Malou's guidance impacted hundreds of other young people. Many of the Dinka youth who had very little previous exposure to Christianity now received training in Bible knowledge and experience in being leaders.

Several of them went for further theological studies. Nikkel comments on the Dinka churches in the North: “Despite their poverty, these were flourishing, self-supporting vernacular churches” (2001:229).

Evangelism became a major priority. Young evangelists went to towns in North and South Sudan where they preached and planted new congregations. Werner et al quote the following significant statement of Daniel Deng. He was a Dinka evangelist who went to Port Sudan: “Sudan is *our* country, we must be ready to meet the need of our people by telling the Good News even if Christians are persecuted for their faith” (2000:462).

Congregations were established in northern towns where there was previously no Anglican Christian witness. In southern towns like Juba and Malakal old congregations received new vitality. Groups of evangelists also went through rural areas where they preached and organized prayer centres for new believers. The evangelistic efforts laid a strong foundation for the future when rural Dinka populations turned to Christ *en masse*.

Bishop Gwynne College played a very important role in the formation of ECS pastors before staff and students had to leave it in 1965. The 1972 Peace Agreement made it possible for training to be resumed there. In 1975 Eluzai Munda and twelve students returned with their families. At first life was very hard and academic standards were low. Eventually the College regained its reputation as being a worthy training institute (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:109).

Benaiah Duku Poggo was principal from 1980-1992. He left a legacy of peace and reconciliation behind. Poggo insisted that all the staff and students had to strive for practical peace and reconciliation between everybody involved at the College. It made a lasting impression on many future church leaders. In 1987 Bishop Gwynne College moved to Juba after SPLA soldiers abducted four expatriate missionaries. Even this did not stop Poggo of promoting peace.

Butrus Tia Shokai was another church leader who played a vital role. He established an ECS presence in the Nuba Mountains. Shokai travelled many miles on foot and on donkey, preaching and training evangelists. In 1971 he became Assistant Bishop and in 1976 he was consecrated as Bishop of the Diocese of Omdurman. He established the

Omdurman Bible Training Institute where church leaders received theological training in Arabic (Werner et al 2000:470).

The program was developed in a non-residential way so that students could do most of their studies at home and then come to the Institute for only short periods of time. The program known as Theological Education by Extension (TEE), had great potential. Unfortunately many saw it as a cheap substitute for the “real thing” (residential training) and in time the institute adopted more traditional ways of instruction.

In 1973 Elinana Ngalamu was elected the first Sudanese Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. He was enthroned in Juba in February 1974. When the Archbishop of Canterbury visited Juba in 1976 four new dioceses were established. Ngalamu became the first ECS Archbishop (Werner et al 2000:456-457).

6.4.1.4 A previously unreceptive tribe turns to God

Andrew Wheeler writes the following about the Diocese of Bor: “This diocese of the Episcopal Church of Sudan under Bishop Nathaniel Garang probably represents the most complete religious transformation that can be observed in the Sudan at the present time” (1998d: 22). What makes the turn of the Bor Dinka to Christianity even more noteworthy is the fact that they have resisted it for so long.

Bor was the area where Archdeacon Archibald Shaw, the pioneer CMS missionary had invested most of his life in the first half of the twentieth century. Not many Bor Dinka responded to his preaching at the time. In the nineteen-nineties the situation changed radically. Nathaniel Garang became the leader of a vibrant Christian community in the area after the Bor Dinka as a whole turned away from their traditional gods to embrace Christianity.

After finishing his studies at the Kenyan Pentecostal Bible School in Nairobi in 1973, Garang first returned to Juba where Bishop Elinana Ngalamu ordained him. In 1975 he went to Bor where he was active as an evangelist, preacher and trainer of other Dinka evangelists (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:248). He was consecrated Bishop of Bor in 1984.

When civil war erupted again in 1983 many ordained clergy left the country. Nathaniel Garang opted to stay with his people. He lived in Bor Town until May 1986 and then moved to the countryside. Garang related well with the rural Dinka. In turn they received him warmly. He preached, taught and baptized ECS believers in the years when Bor was a main target for the government. They targeted the area since it was the home of the SPLA leader John Garang (Nikkel 2001:243).

Bishop Garang ordained many young pastors who carried on the work in the absence of more senior leaders. In the ten years between 1982 and 1991 the eighteen small churches in the region multiplied to 120! Many praying centres were also established. Seventy-three pastors, forty-eight lay evangelists and many women leaders took care of the congregations (Werner et al 2000:543-544).

Many of the young pastors were converted in the church clubs in Khartoum. They responded enthusiastically to their like-minded leader and together they did vigorous evangelism. Bor Dinka started to search for theological and Biblical meaning of the war that devastated their country. They often expressed their deepest feelings in songs. Nikkel quotes a verse from a song composed by a young Dinka woman who wrote in a time of distress (2001:331)

Have compassion.
O God, for we are finished.
Our bones upon earth and those of people
Scattered across the land.
What shall we do, O God?
Birds of prey are devouring us,
And wild animals eating us.
Is the price not yet sufficient?
The price for buying the land?
Now, comfort us with our land,
Compensate us with our land O God

In December 1989 Bishop Paride Taban made contact with Garang. The two of them travelled together to Nairobi, Rome and Geneva. They became powerful spokesmen for

the Church of Southern Sudan. Their visits stirred the Church outside Sudan and led to new interest and involvement of the outside Christian world in the war-torn country.

In 1986 Garang had baptized an illiterate pastoralist called Kon Ajith. Kon Ajith took the name Paul at his baptism. Paul had dreams that motivated him to go on a three-year preaching tour through big parts of Southern Sudan's pastoralist regions. He preached that all shrines of the traditional gods together with everything associated with it had to be destroyed. A huge place of worship had to be built in a central place and it had to be called Zion. This church had to be built in the form of a cross. According to Paul's preaching it would serve as a place of unity and reconciliation between tribes that were traditional enemies. Paul warned that God's wrath would descend upon Sudan if people ignored his message (Werner et al 2000:545-546).

Few people heeded Kon Ajith's words. Then Nuer forces attacked Bor with chilling ferocity in October and November 1991. Riak Machar and Lam Akol who started their own movement after defecting from the SPLA supported the attacks. The attackers raided or killed approximately one million head of cattle, killed thousands of people and caused more or less 250 000 people to flee from the area (Werner et al 2000:546).

Traditional spiritual leaders tried to stem the attacks by bringing many sacrifices. In the end the attackers killed them and the shrines were destroyed. This event caused the people of Bor to undergo a radical spiritual transformation. Thousands rejected the traditional gods. They felt their gods had rejected them first. "Stripped of their cattle, dying of shock, survivors began to believe that the Christian gospel they had heard might be genuine" (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:253).

Bor Dinka believers began to construct the church building Kon Ajith preached about. The church was called Zion. While it was constructed the remaining traditional shrines were destroyed. Thousands of people converted to Christianity and were baptized. Wheeler states that about 90% of the people residing in Bor called themselves Christians at the end of the twentieth century (Werner et al 2000:547).

All the drama alarmed the government forces in Bor Town. Soldiers were sent to Zion and on 26 December 1992 they shot Paul Kon Ajith. They hacked his body to pieces, but did

not touch the half finished church building. Kon Ajith's death did not stop the resolve of Bor's rural population to make a new beginning. The church of Zion was completed and in February 1994 approximately 30 000 people gathered to burn a huge pile of collected traditional religious artefacts. It was a visible sign of Christ's victory over all evil forces.

Paul Kon was an embarrassment to the ECS-leadership due to his unorthodox way of preaching. Although he played a key role in opening the hearts of many Bor Dinka to the message of the Christian God his memory and teaching has been suppressed as far as possible (Wheeler 1998d: 23).

After the Nuer raids, many Bor Dinka fled to the three refugee camps of Ame, Aswa and Atepi. The so-called "Triple A" camps were close to Nimule in Eastern Equatoria. Nikkel writes: "Displaced, stripped of cattle, and deserted even by *jak*, people have sought security in the church" (2001:254). In March 1992 more or less 550 converts were baptized. Significantly, three of them were previously traditional religious leaders.

In 1994 fresh insecurity forced the Bor Dinka to move to yet another camp at Labone. The camp was close to the Uganda border. At this time many internally displaced Southerners moved to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. All through their travels the Christians took their faith with them. The result was that the refugee camps became important centres of spiritual growth. The SPLA viewed the refugee camps from a military perspective and saw it as potential recruitment centres. Many who joined the SPLA were Christians. Their influence was such that "the army itself has been Christianized, and Bible study and prayer established as a part of the pattern of military life" (Werner et al 2000:548).

6.4.1.5 Theological training in Bor and Dhiaukey

Bishop Nathaniel Garang believed in the training of young leaders. Nikkel describes him as "... an avid evangelist, willing to train committed Christians, male or female, and encourage their initiatives" (2001:243). He used the method of "Training of Trainers" (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:249) and in this way developed a much-needed group of young church leaders. Garang trained close to 70 pastors, many lay evangelists and a significant number of women's workers in Bor in the very difficult war years between 1984 and 1992.

Garang was not the only ECS church leader active in theological training. In 1991 Rev Reuben Macir Makoi opened a small Bible School at Dhiaukuei, close to Rumbek. He wanted to address the lack of pastors and other ministries in the area. Although the Bible school was in fact more a centre for literacy training the students went on frequent evangelism excursions. These excursions would at times continue for three consecutive weeks (Wheeler 1998d: 24).

Macir Makoi started the project without any outside help. Students and the churches that sent them provided food. Cowhides served as blackboards and cassava roots were used as chalk. Since there were no exercise books students wrote with their fingers on the ground. The Bible School proved to be popular and within two years 160 students attended. What was also remarkable was the number of women who attended. Half of the students were female.

One of the main goals of the Bible School was to train evangelists. It consequently led to a strong emphasis on literacy. Students had to learn to read the Bible and the Anglican Prayer Books. Prayer also played a significant role. There were many testimonies of barren women who became pregnant, sick people who received healing and even barren cattle becoming fertile after they had been prayed for. Wheeler writes: "Prayer, both formal, liturgical prayer, and the informal prayer of the individual and the family in response to immediate need, has replaced cattle sacrifice as the means of encountering the multitude of contemporary crises, and invoking spiritual aid" (1998d:25).

Dhiaukuei Bible School became the centre of notable church growth in the area. While there were only nine small ECS churches in the Rumbek area in 1983 there were at least 250 churches and 250 locally trained lay leaders a decade later. According to some local sources churches multiplied to 430 between 1993 and 1995 (Werner et al 2000: 550).

Unfortunately power struggles and fights over the control of resources drained most of the original energy in later years. The fact that Macir Makoi was not an Akaar Dinka but a Jur by tribe made that he was not well accepted by jealous leaders from the area. It brought the work to a near standstill.

6.4.1.6 A new Protestant initiative in Northern and Western Bahr al Ghazal

When the Sphere System was implemented in the early nineteen hundreds Northern and Western Bahr al Ghazal were given to RCC. For decades RCC was the only Christian Church working in these regions. In an effort to inculturate the gospel they allowed converts to continue practising certain traditional rites.

Inculturated Christianity was challenged by a group of young ECS evangelists. They found it unacceptable and compromising. The zealous young ECS believers were converted in refugee camps in Ethiopia. In 1992 many of them returned to their home areas where they began to preach a radical new message. They had developed their spirituality in an environment of no compromise with traditional spirits. Their firm belief was that “Only the overthrow of these spirits and the rooting out of their influence and power will avert divine judgement and bring in God’s peace” (Werner et al 2000:554).

Wilson Garang, John Kwac, Jeremiah Ayei and Santino Manut were pioneers in their home areas. They started with their own families imploring them to burn their traditional idols (called *jak*). Their logic was that if the *jak* were stronger than the God of the Bible they would bring severe harm to the evangelists. On the other hand if the evangelists’ God were the strongest He would protect his messengers. No harm befell the evangelists after daring family members burnt their *jak*. The result was that many others accepted the Christian God.

One of the reasons for the rapid growth of ECS in Northern Bahr al Ghazal was that the evangelists provided “assurance and a demonstration of divine protection among the threatening and uncontrollable forces of war, famine, disease, spiritual assault and death” (Werner et al 2000:555) to people living in fear and insecurity.

As more and more people accepted the “strong God” of the evangelists, leaders like Bishop Nathaniel Garang decided to strengthen the movement. In February 1993 he ordained Wilson Garang even though he had no formal training at all. In 1996 Santino Manut also received ordination from Bishop Garang’s hands. Their ordination gave the young pioneers the authority to plant new churches and the first one Wilson Garang planted was in his home village called Adwor.

Many new churches were planted and thousands of people joined the ECS. The author of this thesis had the privilege of meeting several of the pioneers in Bahr al Ghazal. He visited some of the churches they planted. Testimonies of how whole congregations would fast and pray before going out on evangelistic campaigns abound. It was not strange for fifteen to twenty new churches to be planted in one year!

Wilson Garang and his colleagues realized they had a need of a bishop. They approached the church leadership and in 1999 Bishop Henry Riak became Bishop of the Diocese of Wau. Bishop Riak wanted to establish twenty Church schools, a mission centre with a Bible school and a Church clinic (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:266).

Relationship problems plagued the diocese from the very beginning. Feelings between the young ECS-leaders and the RCC were also tense at times because the ECS leaders criticized the RCC's view of traditional religions. As was already said they perceived the RCC's efforts of presenting the local population with an inculturated gospel as a compromising attitude. Furthermore there was a lot of resistance from the traditional spiritual leaders and their supporters especially since the evangelists had no tolerance for their practices and beliefs. In some instances zeal without knowledge did unnecessary harm to relationships. Confrontation was unavoidable, but the way it was handled could have been different.

Power struggles in the leadership developed and relief supplies were manipulated for questionable purposes. It resulted in confusion and bitter divisions. Like in many other parts of Sudan a wonderful work of the Spirit lost its momentum due to avoidable strife (Wheeler 1998d: 26).

6.4.1.7 ECS and RCC cooperation in Yei, Kaya and Ugandan refugee camps

Bishop Seme Solomona was a gifted evangelist with a heart for missionary work. He was principal of Bishop Gwynne College for two years and coordinated evangelism for ECS before his consecration as Bishop of Yei Diocese in 1984 (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:232). In 1990 Bishop Solomona and Father Peter Dada of RCC led about 10 000 people from Yei Town to the border town of Kaya. The move followed a warning of SPLA leaders that they planned to attack the government-controlled town. Kaya was a deserted

town at the time and the two church leaders took upon themselves the task of setting up a new community. Solomona and Dada worked together in such a close manner that their cooperation became the model for inter-church committees that were established in later years all over Southern Sudan (Wheeler 1998d: 30).

In August 1993 the two leaders led their followers to refugee camps in Uganda. Government forces pushed back the SPLA and threatened to capture Kaya. Approximately 30 000 people moved to Koboko in Uganda. All the moving led to the creation of a comparison between the Sudanese refugees and the Israelites during the latter's exodus from Egypt (Wheeler 1998d: 31).

In Koboko the first buildings constructed were churches. A theological training institute, Bishop Allison Bible School was also established. Life in Koboko was very hard with pressures from Sudanese government soldiers on the one side and Ugandan rebel groups on the other. Bishop Allison Bible School was burnt down in October 1996 and attacks by Ugandan rebel groups on the refugees increased. People began to despair. Everything changed when the SPLA suddenly began to gain the upper hand over the Sudan government forces.

SPLA soldiers captured Yei in 1997 and a massive movement of refugees back to this strategic town followed. Christian leaders drew Biblical parallels from the events. "The Exodus saga had come full circle with the return to their homeland of a 'faithful people', vindicated in their confidence in a 'faithful God'" (Werner et al 2000:570).

6.4.1.8 A split in and eventual reconciliation of the ECS-leadership

The tragic reality of church splits cannot be ignored. Where possible, lessons must be learnt to minimize similar events in future. Although the crisis appeared to have been the result of power struggles it was more "... a personal crisis and a crisis in relationships" (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:160).

In October 1986 Archbishop Elinana Ngalamu, the first ECS Archbishop was receiving treatment in Nairobi after suffering a stroke. His legitimate period of 10 years in the position of archbishop had come to an end. A decision had to be made on whether the

House of Bishops would extend his term with another five years as was allowed by the constitution. Bishop Benamina Yugusuk of Rumbek held the position of Dean of the Province. It gave him the authority to act on behalf of the archbishop during his absence.

Bishop Yugusuk convened a meeting that brought all the ECS bishops and other senior church leaders together. During the discussions that took place from 13-17 October 1986 the majority decided not to extend Archbishop Ngalamu's term. Yugusuk was asked to be the acting archbishop until elections were held (Kayanga & Wheeler 1999:160-161).

When Elinana Ngalamu heard of the decision he refused to accept it. A group of bishops, mostly from the same Moru tribe as Ngalamu and urban Dinka-bishops sided with him. It resulted in increasing conflict. In the struggle that followed bishops of the two opposing groups constantly tried to dismiss their opponents. Elinana Ngalamu consecrated a whole group of new bishops thereby complicating the problem significantly. The conflict became so violent that first the cathedral in Khartoum and then the cathedral in Juba were closed for a time.

In 1988 Benamina Yugusuk was consecrated as the new archbishop and recognized as such by the worldwide Anglican community. Efforts to bring the two rival groups together succeeded in 1992 although some wounds still remained for many years to come. The group of bishops consecrated by Elinana Ngalamu received full bishop status and their own dioceses in 1996. The decision increased the ECS dioceses to twenty-four. It was a costly solution and not very practical. On the positive side it brought much needed unity in the ECS (Werner et al 2000:635-636)

Yugusuk remained Archbishop of ECS until his retirement in February 1998. Due to the ongoing civil war it was not possible to immediately elect his successor. Reverend Daniel Zindo was therefore appointed as Acting Archbishop. Eight months later Zindo tragically died in a road accident. Reverend Joseph Marona became the new Acting Archbishop in February 1999. One year later elections took place and Marona received 121 of the possible 170 votes. He thereby became the third Archbishop of ECS (www.eqlisesoudan.org 7 July 2006).

Marona's election was celebrated with the hope that he would bring unity to ECS and in Sudan. The General Secretary of SCC, Enoch Tombe, commented: "... we thank God that the election of the third Archbishop has new change in the church leadership and we hope this will result to unity, reconciliation, justice and peace in Sudan ... when the church is divided, the society gets divided too and when the church is united, it can be able to play its role of re-conciliation, because this is a demonstration of its message of reconciliation." (www.eglisesoudan.org 7 July 2006). Other high level church leaders also felt that Marona was the man for the moment.

6.4.1.9 New splits in ECS

Unfortunately serious splits occurred in ECS in the past three years. At least two new Anglican branches or breakaway groups were formed due to power struggles and ongoing strife. Bishop Gabriel Roric founded the Reformed Episcopal Church of Sudan (RECS) after Archbishop Marona had defrocked him. He appointed himself as Archbishop of RECS and ordained a number of disgruntled ECS leaders as bishops. Another group of ECS leaders decided to form the Anglican Church of Sudan (ACS). Their main reason apparently is because they did not agree with certain decisions of Bishop Nathaniel Garang and Archbishop Marona. At present the crises have not yet been resolved.

6.4.1.10 Involvement with relief projects

While Sudan was on the verge of a renewed civil war in the early nineteen-eighties it also experienced a huge influx of refugees from neighbouring countries. Thousands of Ugandans fled from Idi Amin's reign of terror. They crossed Sudan's southern border in search of safety. Refugees from Chad spilled over the western border while Eritreans and Ethiopians entered Sudan from the east.

International Christian agencies and the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) launched big relief projects to assist the non-Sudanese refugees inside Sudan. ECS felt they also had a contribution to make. They therefore formed the Department of Relief and Development (DRD). Other denominations also became involved in relief projects.

Wheeler writes the following words, which still serve as a warning for the Church in Sudan concerning priorities and the corruptive power of money (Werner et al 2000:504).

On the one hand it seemed plain that the Churches should be involved in a holistic ministry for their people – caring for body and mind as well as spirit. But, on the other hand, to carry out such work – maybe in education, or primary health care, water development or community development – involved sums of money that the Churches had never handled before. The possibility that the Church's life, leadership and witness would be distorted was very real. Leadership in the Church gave access to finance and resources, and this led to an intensification in the struggle for power in all the Churches – and the splits and schisms that resulted

The present Archbishop of Sudan, Joseph Marona again highlights how donations can make a permanent difference. "I have extensive ministry and personal experience with these destroyed lives, because I minister to these people myself. I am educating some 200 orphans through the help of good Samaritans who support me towards this education programme. Some of the orphans have now graduated from universities, while many others are in secondary and primary schools" (<http://thewitness.org/agw/marona> 7 July 2006)

Recent history proves that good intentions and international money earmarked for holistic ministry in Sudan often results in weakening the Church. At the same time much good resulted when donations were well managed. There are no easy solutions to this problem. The Church has a responsibility to take care of all the needs of people but her leaders also need to be above reproach when it comes to the management of money.

6.4.1.11 ECS involvement in politics

ECS played an active role on the political scene in recent years. A Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Commission was formed with Bishop Daniel Deng Bul as the first chairman. In the years preceding the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, ECS was active in the dialogue for peace. ECS leaders played a leading role in 2001 when church leaders gathered in Nairobi to discuss the role of the church in bringing the war to an end. During

a second meeting Catholic and Anglican leaders met in Kampala and issued a joint statement in which they condemned the Sudan government's efforts to undermine peace initiatives. They also sent out a clear message that the Church was committed to bring peace in Sudan at all costs (<http://www.anglicannifcon.org> 16 Sept 2006)

After the signing of the peace agreement they continue to promote the implementation of different resolutions (<http://thewitness.org/agw/marona> 7 July 2006). Bishop Daniel Bul made it clear that Sudan needs international involvement for the CPA to succeed. One important issue in the interim period before the 2011 referendum is the return of Sudanese refugees and of those who lived in exile.

6.41.12 Excerpt from the author's trip report of March 2002

The author had the privilege of spending quality time with a group of ECS pastors in Northern Bahr al Ghazal. I taught the TTI curriculum of thirty modules with five lessons in each module. It may be fitting to close the section on ECS with an excerpt of my trip report after graduating the class (Trip report: 1 April 2002).

It was a special moment for both them and me as twelve of them came forward to receive acknowledgement for what they have done ... All of them tended their families' cattle at the communal cattle camps when they were young boys. Now they have human flocks to take care of. Quite a few of them were soldiers, fighting for the SPLA (Sudan People's Liberated Army) against the Sudan government troops. Now they are fulltime soldiers for Christ. They pastor congregations consisting of hundreds of people, yet they have very little formal training to equip them for the task. They are strong and weak. Clay pots filled with the immeasurable treasures of God, yet not always knowing how to share it with others.

There is John Akol, who nearly died during one battle when a mortar exploded directly behind him ... Zecheriah Aken ... Lives in an area far away from the other students and in the rain season a huge swamp separates him from where we normally gathered. Once he had to walk for

five hours through water that reached up to his neck. A few years earlier he was beaten fifty lashes by a SPLA-officer who did not like him preaching in his area. Neither of these experiences could stop him from doing what God called him to do ... Stephen Mayuen loves singing, dancing and children. Every night he gathers the young ones in his church and teaches them new songs. Accompanied by the rhythmic beating of drums they will praise God for hours upon end ... Joseph Mamer, who made plans to go to America, but who was brought back through great conviction to his own country. It was burnt into his heart to serve his own people with his Saviour's life-giving words.

We had some very special moments together ... and since none of us are perfect yet, we also had some good fights. Our time together is finished; in the sense that we shall not be together as teacher and students anymore. When I go to visit them from now on we shall talk together as colleagues, fellow-workers in God's kingdom. I'm looking forward to see how this new circle will develop

6.5 Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS)

6.5.1 PCOS and SPEC

It is important to understand that there are two Presbyterian churches in Sudan, each with its own government. The reason for this is that the PCOS in North Sudan was basically an extension of the Evangelical Church in Egypt while the PCOS in the South was the result of mission work done by the American Mission (Werner et al 2000:457).

As was said before thousands of Southerners moved to Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman. They went in search of education, looked for employment and tried to escape the growing insecurity in the South. Many of them converted to Christianity during their stay and joined the existing churches. Due to the presence of Presbyterian missionaries in Upper Nile most of the Nuer converts joined the Evangelical Church.

Unfortunately relationships between the leaders of the Evangelical Church and the Christian Southerners in the Three Towns were often tense. While the Evangelical Church leadership feared that they might lose control if the Southerners became the majority in their congregations the Southerners again felt they were discriminated against (Werner et al 2000:457-458).

In the end several Nuer congregations were established. These congregations followed a Presbyterian liturgy and they had only loose connections with the Evangelical Church. Many young people who were church members in the urban congregations went back to southern towns like Malakal or to their rural homes. There they witnessed and established new congregations.

At present the Presbyterian Church in the North is known as the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC) while the Presbyterian Church in the South is known as the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS).

6.5.2 PCOS and theological training

Although the American Mission had established only five congregations by 1952, the desire of the Sudanese believers belonging to these congregations to have their own identity resulted in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan. At first they accepted the name “The Church of Christ in Upper Nile” but this name was quickly dropped in favour of its present name. (Werner et al 2000:457)

The training of pastors became an important issue and in 1974 the Giffen Bible School opened its doors at Doleib Hill close to Malakal. Financial constraints and low academic standards limited the value of the training but it still provided needed training for evangelists and even pastors. Most pastors were sent to Kenya or Beirut for further studies (Werner et al 2000:508).

Although pastors going abroad received good training they afterwards found it difficult to return to their simple rural congregations. Main stumbling blocks were the simple and often difficult life in rural Upper Nile and the fact that the pastors received very small

salaries from their congregations there. Many exchanged the ministry for government positions.

At the same time the evangelists and pastors who had received their training inside Sudan continued to serve their congregations even under very difficult circumstances. Wheeler makes the following observation that has significance for the present situation in Sudan as well: “Establishing traditional church structures in post-war Sudan proved very hard. The traditional system compared unfavourably with the flexible, instinctive and sustainable patterns developed in the bush during the war” (Werner et al 2000:508).

6.5.3 Work among women and Bible translation

PCOS leaders realized the need for the women in their congregations to receive special attention. They invited Maria Schenkler of the Swiss-based Basel Mission to come and develop a special women program. Schenkler and her colleagues organised the Christian Women’s Fellowship (CWF) in 1976.

Apart from spiritual activities like Bible study CWF introduced training in skills like primary health care and home economics. When the members of CWF started to participate in the Women’s World Day of Prayer it proved to be very popular. These ladies with very little exposure to the outside world suddenly felt part of the world’s Christian female community. Although women were not allowed to be ordained pastors their value in leadership roles received new appreciation. In 1985 Esther Ayak Daniel became the first Sudanese head of PCOS’ Department for Women’s Work (Werner et al 2000:491).

A need for a complete vernacular Bible prompted PCOS leaders to invite Rev Rob McLaughlin in the mid-seventies to oversee their translation project. The goal was to translate the Old Testament into Nuer. James Bol Top Rer and Tut Wan Yua made the greatest contributions resulting in the publishing of the complete Nuer Bible in January 2000 (Werner et al 2000:493).

6.5.4 PCOS-work among the Murle

With the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement in 1972 it became possible for missionaries to return to Sudan. Jon and Barbara Arenson of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) went to stay with the Murle in Pibor in 1976. They and a small group of other missionaries desired to help in reviving a Murle church that would be indigenous, led by local leaders and zealous for evangelism. The missionaries decided to work through the medium of the Murle language and not to comment on the Murle culture in a negative way. They focused on translating the New Testament in the Murle language.

The contribution of the missionaries gave new strength to the PCOS Murle church. Rapid church growth indeed took place between 1980 and 1984. Arenson explained the growth as being the result of a culturally sensitive approach by him and his fellow missionaries. They had made a deliberate effort to allow the local church leadership to emerge without missionary moulding or domination and their efforts bore fruit (quoted by Wheeler 1998d: 22). One of the young leaders that emerged during this time was Idris Nalos Kida.

Idris Nalos Kida was the son of a respected elder in the Pibor area. He worked as a translator for the Arensons and then with their help went for theological studies in Kenya. One night he saw a film about missionary work in New Guinea that touched him deeply. This film and subsequent dreams compelled Idris Nalos to return to his home area. He gathered local church leaders and organised mission teams to go out to Murle villages. The mission teams did their work with great enthusiasm. It led to conflict between the fiery young evangelists and the “unadventurous Presbyterian church” (Werner et al 2000:565).

The PCOS elders of Pibor resented the strong stand Idris Nalos took against smoking, drinking and immorality and their evangelistic zeal. Idris Nalos eventually completed his studies and after his ordination was sent to Juba to start a Murle Presbyterian church. Instead of focusing on the Murle in Juba he found a multi-ethnic congregation that used Arabic. The church was vibrant resulting in the founding of several other similar churches. At present Idris Nalos resides in Khartoum with a vision of evangelising unreached tribes in the north of Sudan.

6.5.5 Renewed civil war and amazing church growth

The civil war erupted again in 1983. It forced PCOS to unofficially divide itself in two parts namely PCOS Akobo for the areas under SPLA control and PCOS Malakal for the areas under government control. Rev Pakwan writes the following in a document Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency (PRDA): Vision during the Pre-Interim and the Interim Period 2005-2011 (2005:2):

Once again on the 16th May 1983, a war flared up between the Khartoum based government and the southern rebels, this had divided the PCOS administration into two, because the PCOS Malakal has no access to the congregations in the liberated areas.

As a solution to the division imposed by the war, the PCOS Malakal and the PCOS Partners met in Belfast in Northern Ireland U.K in 1992 and decided that a Liaison Office be created for liberated areas to be based in Nairobi to coordinate the activities between PCOS Malakal the Partners and the congregations in the Southern Sudan.

PCOS Malakal remains the Headquarters for the whole Church. The oneness of PCOS as a Church has never changed in spite of the two administrations imposed by the civil strife in the country

It was not only PCOS leaders in government-controlled areas who could not visit church members in the SPLA controlled areas. Pastors working in SPLA controlled areas could also not visit towns for fear of arrest. There were examples of pastors belonging to the latter group who were severely beaten and even killed while visiting government controlled areas (Interview with Rev James Tor: 14 July 2006).

In 1985 increasing instability in Upper Nile led to a mass exodus to refugee camps in Ethiopia. Not a single PCOS pastor was left in the area (Wheeler 1998d: 15). The move to Ethiopia would however greatly increase the membership numbers of PCOS in subsequent years. In the refugee camps of Itang, Panyido and Dima hundreds of

refugees responded to the gospel. Their insecure circumstances made them receptive for the hope held out to them in Christ. Large baptismal services were held during which hundreds of new believers were baptized. In the youth groups that were formed young Christians would express their search for life's many questions in song.

Denominational differences faded due to shared experiences of immense suffering and when large numbers of ECS Christians arrived from Bor in 1987 they were welcomed to worship in the mostly Nuer PCOS-church. When the war made it impossible for Bishop Nathaniel Garang to travel to the Ethiopian refugee camps he asked Nuer elders of PCOS to ordain Peter Bol Arok as an ECS-pastor (Nikkel 2001:238-239).

With the fall of the Mengistu-government in Ethiopia in May 1991 the new Ethiopian rulers decided to expel all Sudanese from the refugee camps in their country. In June 1991 about 370,000 Sudanese refugees were forced to flee back to their country (Wheeler 1998d:16). The majority of the expelled refugees were Nuer and Dinka.

Approximately 145 000 refugees from Upper Nile, mostly from the Nuer tribe, settled for some time around Nasir (Werner et al 2000:536). When the rain season ended and travelling became easier many returned to their home areas. On their return they found a vibrant church in Upper Nile. It was extraordinary because from 1985 onward there was not a single Presbyterian pastor or Catholic priest in the whole Upper Nile area.

The returning refugees found 1000 evangelists leading hundreds of new village churches (Wheeler 1998d:16). Most of the evangelists were young men and a number of young women with no theological training. Many of them were barely literate yet they were accepted as leaders in their church communities. Through their efforts whole communities were embracing the Christian faith.

The Church was the only institution left in the Upper Nile rural areas that could bring hope in dangerous and unstable circumstances. Villagers resented the government's efforts of forcing the Muslim faith on them and they had lost their trust in local divinities. Their traditional worldviews failed to explain and give constructive solutions to the wholesale destruction brought along by the war. A new direction was needed and the young men provided it (Wheeler 1998d: 17).

Even though they often had no Bibles in their services they worshipped the Creator God who had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. The Christian God was seen as the One who could be a real Source of help when such help was desperately needed. Villagers in the Upper Nile region also saw the Church as a source of literacy and education. Whole communities therefore responded to the gospel message preached by the young evangelists.

With the return of the refugees from Ethiopia the village churches received even more vibrancy. Aid agencies followed the refugees from Ethiopia and the evangelists became an important link between them and their communities. They became involved in relief and development projects.

The amazing growth in the rural areas posed many challenges to the established PCOS-leadership who had established itself in Nairobi during the tumultuous years of the civil war. While these leaders affirmed the fact that what happened in Upper Nile was clearly God's work they struggled to find solutions on how to treat the young evangelists and their congregations. Relationships were often strained and 'grass root leaders' were often frustrated, feeling that their main leaders remained too distant while they kept donated resources to themselves. The frustrations led to fights, accusations and mistrust (Werner et al 2000:538-539).

6.5.6 Growth in PCOS Akobo

Reverend Matthew Matthiang Deng was a Nuer Bible translator in Nairobi in 1992. He asked the PCOS leadership if he could take care of the PCOS-congregations in SPLA controlled areas. Church growth had taken on such dimensions that there was an urgent need for proper organization. PCOS partners pledged to support the churches in the SPLA controlled areas financially. The church leaders accepted and confirmed his request.

Matthiang Deng then travelled to Nasir where he met the church leaders who had come back from the Ethiopian refugee camps. In 1992 the First General Assembly of PCOS Akobo was held for the pastors in SPLA-controlled areas. Matthiang was elected as moderator with Reverend Paul Bol the secretary and Reverend Simon Deng the

treasurer. For four years the elected leadership guided the mostly rural church of Upper Nile (Interview with Reverend James Tor: 14 July 2006).

In 1995 the second General Assembly was held in Akobo and some leadership disputes came up. When these disputes were not resolved Rev John Jok Chol and some evangelists left PCOS and joined ECS. This led to the establishment of the Episcopal Church in Akobo which was a traditionally PCOS-area.

Despite the problems the PCOS continued to grow rapidly. Several new churches were planted and many new pastors were ordained to take care of them. Some of these pastors came from the Ethiopian refugee camps while others were pastors who ministered in Upper Nile while the area was virtually isolated from the outside world. Still others came from Kenya where they had studied theology (Interview with Rev James Tor: 14 July 2006).

Bible Schools were established through local initiative to supply in the high demand for trained church leaders. The Thornyor Bible School was established in Upper Nile with three PCOS pastors as tutors. Since many PCOS members were still living in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya the Kakuma Mobile Bible School (KMBS) was opened there. KMBS trained church leaders from all 48 PCOS parishes. Church leaders from other denominations were also invited to join the training program. The author had the privilege to visit KMBS during a visit to Kakuma in 2004.

6.5.7 Founding of the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency (PRDA)

An international focus on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan led to the establishment of several aid agencies. Church leaders in Sudan also wanted to contribute to the relief effort. It led to the development of relief departments in several churches. PCOS established their relief department in 1993 and called it the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency or PRDA (Pakwan 2005:3).

PRDA was very active in relief work and managed several projects. Unfortunately the huge amounts of donated money leaders of PRDA had to handle led to mismanagement and charges of corruption. Pakwan writes: "...as a consequence of confusion and

misunderstanding within the leadership of the PCOS/A, PRDA entered into crisis that resulted to a suspension of funding by its partners and donors. All field based activities came to a standstill” (2005:3).

PCOS leaders addressed the crisis and it was resolved towards the end of 2001. A new leadership was elected to manage PRDA. A Partnership Agreement was formulated between CEAS and PRDA giving the latter a new credibility. PRDA then requested their previous donors to resume funding of PRDA projects. At least three international NGO’s were willing to hand over medical and educational projects to PRDA.

With an eye on the period between the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the referendum in 2011 PRDA wants to focus on education, health care, agricultural projects, water related projects, conservation, the empowerment of women and projects concerning micro-credits (Pakwan 2005:4)

As part of PRDA’s planning they want to establish their headquarters either in the capital city of Southern Sudan or in Malakal. Recognizing the baggage PRDA is carrying due to past mismanagement, the leadership is determined to face the future and to make a real difference in the lives of suffering Sudanese. “PRDA is an arm of the Presbyterian Church of the Sudan and as such is committed to addressing the needs of our brothers and sisters in the affected areas to the benefit of all (Pakwan 2005:6).

6.5.8 Divisions and power struggles among the PCOS-leaders

All the information in the next two sections (6.5.8-6.5.9) is the result of an interview with Rev James Tor of PCOS on 14 July 2006 unless otherwise indicated.

Reverend Matthiang Deng continued as moderator until 1997. He retained this position until the third General Assembly in Ayod in 1997 when Reverend Paul Bol was elected the new moderator. Reverend Peter Gai Lual became the executive secretary. Bol and Gai Lual led the PCOS until disputes about church administration brought renewed tension in the leadership. Alleged mismanagement of donor money and unauthorized ordination of pastors alienated the leaders from one another.

The tension continued until March 1999 when the Assembly through a majority vote of no confidence removed Reverend Paul Bol from his position. The Assembly consisted of delegates (a pastor and elder) of all the PCOS congregations and parishes in the areas under SPLA control. Reverend Peter Rit Machar who was the deputy moderator at the time became the new moderator. Those who opposed Paul Bol elected him.

Not all the delegates were happy with the decision and the Assembly became a verbal battlefield. Accusations and counter-accusations continued. Paul Bol did not accept the vote of no confidence and elected his own executive committee. He also ordained several new pastors. Peter Rit did the same. The existing crisis was significantly worsened by the actions of the two rival leaders.

PCOS now had two executive committees who opposed each other. The situation continued until the political and military leader, Dr Riak Machar intervened. He was a member of PCOS and he convinced Paul Bol to step down in June 1999. Part of his executive committee was accommodated within the PCOS leadership administration of Reverend Peter Rit.

The solution however was short lived. In December 1999 Peter Bol reclaimed his power as moderator with the backing of the director of PRDA. Bol's decision led to a lot of tension in the PCOS leadership. A delegation of PCOS Malakal tried to mediate. They called for a meeting in Nairobi. The mediation session led to the formation of an interim administration led by a four-man committee.

Both Peter Rit and Paul Bol rejected the interim administration solution. They accused the mediation team of being unfair in their assessment of the whole conflict. In the process the newly elected interim administration became part of the increasing tension. The dispute continued until March 2001 when all parties agreed to convene a General Assembly in Mading.

Hopes were raised that the conflicting parties could solve their problems without outside intervention. Delegates left Nairobi for Lokichoggio from where they planned to fly to Mading. Unfortunately the vehicle they travelled in was involved in an accident. Peter Rit and John Chol Chan were seriously injured. The treasurer died.

In spite of the setback the Assembly continued in May 2001. A new moderator was elected namely Reverend Peter Makuac. Reverend Booth Reath became the new vice-moderator.

6.5.9 A fresh beginning and old tensions

Shortly after the General Assembly had taken place the church leadership wrote a document entitled “The Way Forward”. In it guidelines were given on how to manage recurring problems in future. PCOS entered a time of renewal. Confidence among donors was restored and the future looked bright in terms of relief and development projects. Church membership increased and it looked as if PCOS had come out of its conflict-ridden past.

In March 2005 the executive committee met to review the end of their four-year term and to plan the next General Assembly. However, several constraints were considered and they were given an additional year before the Assembly would convene in 2006. In March 2006 the Eighth General Assembly gathered in Akobo with 188 official delegates from 48 parishes.

The moderator Peter Makuac said he was willing to serve for another term, but the vice-moderator, Booth Reath made it clear he wanted to contest for the position. The leaders reached a deadlock. Apart from the growing tension among the delegates political tension also mounted in the area. Before the agenda for the General Assembly could be finalized the local authorities in Akobo closed the meeting due to insecurity. Everybody was asked to leave as soon as possible for his or her own safety's sake.

Since no executive committee had been chosen Peter Makuac wanted to continue in the position of moderator. He had the support of several leaders. Booth Reath with his supporters opposed the decision. They said constitutionally Makuac's term had expired and there was a need for a new moderator. If it was not possible an interim administration had to be formed to lead the church until another General Assembly could be held.

In May 2006 fresh tension broke out in the leadership. A key leader was accused of fraud. He was arrested and imprisoned. Doctor Riak Machar by now was vice-president in the

government of South Sudan. He again tried to mediate but no solution has been found yet.

A key leader of PCOS wrote the following e-mail to the author on 15 September 2006. Since it was a private discussion I will keep the name of the sender anonymous: “Indeed, our PCOS problems have developed habits of growing from time to time since 1990s up to the date. In my opinion, such problems can put to an end by sitting together and share the root causes thoroughly. Stopping those mass ordinations for their votes, call him a thief who is found involved of stealing money even though his baptism might have been done in the River Jordan”.

Many PCOS leaders and members are frustrated with the recurring problems in the top leadership as can be seen in the e-mail quotation above. They are determined to restore the name of their denomination. While being aware of the darker side of recent PCOS history it is also important to recognize that hundreds of Presbyterian members in Sudan have served God faithfully under very difficult circumstances and will continue to do so.

6.6 Africa Inland Church (AIC)

The history of AIC in Sudan is a testimony of endurance despite difficult circumstances. Wheeler described the background in which the newly established denomination developed (1998d: 33).

AIM itself is a fellowship of missionaries each depending on outside support, who can provide little material assistance to the churches they found. Consequently the AIC in Sudan finds itself in a peculiarly vulnerable and lonely situation amidst the problems of contemporary Sudan. In addition, most of its congregations are located in the plains and hills north and east of Nimule where there has been fighting throughout the years of war. Fighting between government and SPLA troops, as well as interfactional fighting and rebel depredations on the civil population, probably mean that the AIC has suffered more comprehensively than any other Christian community in southern Sudan

6.6.1 AIM and the first AIC leadership

When AIM entered Southern Sudan in 1949 they were aware of the fact that they had limited time to accomplish their tasks. One of their main aims was to get an indigenous leadership in place. In December 1957 they organized the first meeting of the Sudan Council. This new body replaced the old missionary council. Andrea Vuni was elected chairman and one of the Congolese evangelists; Uzele Mesa became the first secretary. In effect this was the “birthday” of the Africa Inland Church although it was still known as the Sudan Church Council (Wheeler 1998b:84-85).

Andrea Vuni who was a pioneer missionary in Eastern Equatoria “... provided key leadership during this period of rapid development towards an indigenous church, despite the acute shortage of leadership available to the nascent AIC at the time” (Wheeler 1998b: 85). However he evidently had weak points when it came to working in a team since he was used to working on his own for many years when he had no other option. In later years his weaknesses would lead to his downfall as leader of AIC.

AIC-evangelists went out to lead newly established churches. They did not wait for finances from abroad or better training before reaching out to the many non-Christian communities in Eastern Equatoria. One of these early church leaders was Reverend Thomas Lohima. He remembers that a major problem in the areas where the AIC-evangelists worked was resistance from the Catholics against Protestant initiatives. Unlike the harmony between Catholics and Protestants that marked the Christian communities in the refugee camps of Ethiopia, Eastern Equatoria’s Christians often stood in opposition to each other (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

Another stumbling block the evangelists encountered was that the local population was willing to listen to the gospel but without taking the message to heart. This situation continued until 1963 when the government started to evict missionaries from Southern Sudan.

6.6.2 Mass exodus of Eastern Equatorians to Uganda

In 1964 all missionaries had to leave the Southern Sudan. Local Christian leaders then became the focus of the government's resentment against foreign influences. Hostile acts were not reserved for Christians but included everybody that seemed to be rebellious. In reality it meant animosity against almost all Southerners.

The attitude of the government made it possible and even desirable for soldiers to act harshly against the local population of Eastern Equatoria. Several churches were burnt down and the people felt so threatened that they began to leave their homes in August 1965. Thousands of civilians became refugees in Uganda (Wheeler 1998b: 86).

One after the other the AIC leaders followed their flocks into exile. Andrea Vuni settled in Gulu and used it as a base from where he visited the AIC churches in the different refugee camps. Thomas Lohima finally left Lohutok in 1966 for Uganda. He was the last AIC-pastor to leave Equatoria. Lohima settled in Agago as a refugee while Evangelist Enosa Kwaje remained in Katire Gilo throughout the war years. Elder Timatao Magadi remained in Torit and Simeona Deba took care of the small AIC-community in Kapoeta (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

It is a significant fact that in all denominations in Southern Sudan the local church had to function without ordained leaders for a period of time. It is also noteworthy that it was normally the most trying and difficult times. The fact that most of these churches survived reflects the resilience of the ordinary church member.

Several leaders decided to continue their theological training while being in exile. Abednecho Vuni and Nikolao Oling the sons of Andrea Vuni went to Scott Theological College in Kenya. Thomas Lohima went to Linga Bible School in Congo (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

6.6.3 Return to Sudan

The signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement brought welcome relief to the civilians of Eastern Equatoria. Many returned to their home areas. Upon their return AIC members and leaders strengthened the believers who had remained behind.

Only a few months after peace was restored the Sudan Church Council officially became the Africa Inland Church. By that time the young church only had in the order of 1000 members (Werner et al 2000:458).

Arrangements were made to put key leaders in strategic places. Thomas Lohima took charge of the church in Torit where Nikolao Vuni joined him. Josefa became the church leader at Katire Gilo. Evangelist Enosa pastored the church in Kapoeta while Martin Achaia went to Pajok. Primon Hakim went back to Katire Ayom. The pioneer leader Andrea Vuni returned to Opari.

In 1973 Lohima was sent back to Lohutok for four months and in August 1973 he was transferred to Katire Gilo. The reason was that Josefa went for further studies (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

Relationships between the newly founded AIC and AIM were not altogether smooth. One main reason was that no official hand-over from AIM to AIC occurred. In spite of the omission all the Sudanese church leaders were happy with the name of their new denomination. They were eager to take responsibility of the Sudanese congregations. It was only in August 1999 that AIM officially gave a certificate to church leaders in Kiriadongo acknowledging the name AIC. Doctor Doug Reitzma signed on behalf of AIM and Reverend Thomas Lohima did the same on behalf of AIC (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

Although the facts concerning this transition period are not always clear it seems as if Andrea Vuni became the first chairman. His son Abednecho was apparently appointed "Director" with the responsibility of representing AIC in discussions with government and church officials. Vuni's other son, Nikolao Oling became secretary and treasurer (Wheeler 1998b:87).

During the transition period Abednecho Vuni apparently confronted long existing arrangements. He said the arrangement of limiting churches to specific areas had to be stopped. Vuni clearly disagreed with the Sphere System that divided Southern Sudan denominationally. Abednecho therefore opened Eastern Equatoria to all other Protestant groups.

Another point of contention was the fact that AIM missionaries did not want to function under the AIC leadership. Abednecho Vuni felt the missionaries used AIC to enter Sudan while being unwilling to work under his direction (Wheeler 1998b: 88-89). Vuni's perceptions were valid in many ways but it seemed that his confrontative manner brought unnecessary tension.

Despite the strained relationships AIM was allowed to come back to Sudan under the guise of the Voluntary Service Group (VSG) in 1976. They opened five stations namely Lohutok, Irwoto, Akolokopei, Chagari and Iloli (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

6.6.4 Ordination and theological training

On 16 June 1973 three evangelists received full ordination as AIC-pastors. They were Thomas Lohima, Abednecho Vuni and Nikolao Oling. Reverend Andrea Vuni and Simeona Ncia conducted the ordination in Torit. A fifth pastor, Josefa Mali was ordained around 1978.

AIC leaders had a desire to train their own leaders inside Sudan. In September 1979 the Imatong Bible School was therefore opened at Khor Abiad close to Katire Gilo (Werner et al 2000:478 incorrectly refers to the place as Katire Ayom). Reverend Nikolao Oling was the first principal. He was assisted by Kenyan and expatriate teachers (Werner et al 2000:478). Unfortunately conflict in the AIC caused by the dominant presence of the Vuni family in the leadership resulted in the closure of the Bible School in 1984.

6.6.5 AIC growth in Juba

Many young people who had fled to Uganda from 1965 onward came into contact with lively Christian Unions. Scripture Union and other similar groups had energetic programs running in Uganda's secondary schools and universities. Sudanese who studied in Uganda were spiritually moved by what they experienced (Werner et al 2000:479).

When it became possible for Sudanese civilians to return to Sudan in 1972 the youth started a vigorous movement in Juba. Denominational boundaries faded among young believers, but AIC under the guidance of Reverend John Moi provided a model. Moi had received his theological training at Scott Theological College in Kenya. In the late nineteen seventies he worked as a teacher at Juba Girls Secondary School. At the same time he pastured the AIC congregation (Interview with Reverend Angelo Geri: 17 July 2006).

Moi succeeded in channelling the youth's energy into highly effective avenues. Choirs, Bible study groups and prayer meetings as well as evangelistic outreaches brought real vitality to the Church. Close contact with AIC in Congo stimulated the use of music in the Church. Hundreds of Juba Arabic songs were composed and the songs "... became the common thread binding together the Christian youth of Juba (and other towns) across their different tribal backgrounds and denominational allegiances" (Werner et al 2000:480).

Expatriate Christian workers also played an important role in organising Christian Unions in Juba. Lanny Arenson introduced the Voluntary Service Group (VSG) that served as a development wing for AIM. Through Arenson's motivation VSG got involved in medical work and the renovation of old church buildings in Lohutok. They played a big role in the Building of Imatong Bible School as well. Pat Champion was the administrator for Juba Model School and Russ Noble a secondary school teacher. They were very active with youth ministry and played an important role in the spiritual development of the Juba youth (Interview with Reverend Angelo Geri: 17 July 2006).

Youth conferences were held and regular meetings took place. Wheeler describes it as "the breeding ground for a large number of well-educated, young leaders, with good

biblical and leadership training who were coming through into the Churches in the 1980s” (Werner et al 2000:482).

6.6.6 Conflict in the AIC leadership

As was the case in so many denominations in Sudan conflict erupted between key AIC leaders. There was a general feeling that the Vuni family looked down upon the other pastors. Some of the main reasons were that Reverend Thomas Lohima and others received their training in Bangala and Swahili on a diploma level while the Vuni’s received their training in English (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

When Lohima resisted a decision of the Vuni’s to transfer him, it became the spark that lit the fire of conflict in the AIC leadership. The Vuni’s suspended six pastors who “... represented the new and youthful growing edge of the church, in touch with other churches and the outside world and alert to new ideas and possibilities for witness in the rapidly changing social and political situation in Sudan” (Wheeler 1998b:89).

Matters were complicated by allegations against Abednecho Vuni and the call for his suspension. Sidney Langford who was a previous AIM field director in Sudan became involved. Although he clearly wanted to help solving the problem his involvement had the opposite effect. Relationships became severely strained between the two groups of AIC leaders.

In 1984 VSG offered to play a mediatory role between AIC-pastors. The mediators suggested that the conflicting groups had to come together in an Assembly to discuss their differences. VSG leaders also stated they would work with the leaders who agreed to solve the conflict. In April 1984 most church leaders came together in Torit. The three Vuni’s and Josefa Mali decided not to attend. They declared that such a meeting was a waste of time. Obviously Abednecho Vuni resented the “colonial interference” of the missionaries (Wheeler 1998b: 88-89).

At the first General Assembly attendees discussed the problems and challenges facing AIC. A committee was appointed and Thomas Lohima was elected as chairman. One of

their first tasks was to try and convince the four leaders who did not attend the first meeting to attend a second Assembly planned for November 1984.

Angelo Geri made the following comment on the Assembly: “This Assembly was not a peaceful meeting but was actually planned with the intention of removing the Vuni-family from having dominance over the whole AIC. Tribal issues played a big role in the tension in the AIC-leadership” (Interview: 16 July 2006).

In November 1984 the Second General Assembly was held in Torit. Again the Vuni’s and Josefa refused to attend. The Assembly continued and a new leadership was appointed. Thomas Lohima was elected as the new chairman of AIC. He kept this position until 1999 when he retired (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

The new leadership requested that church property be handed over to them. Andrea Vuni and his sons refused and went to court. They did not recognize the election that took place in their absence. The new group did not push matters. They at first decided to fellowship in Torit West Intermediary School with Pastor James Okot as their pastor. The Vuni-group continued to worship in the AIC church building in Torit. Eventually more people left the Vuni’s and joined the new group. When Josefa Male of Katire Gilo changed sides it sounded the deathblow to the Vuni-group.

After the defection of Josefa Male, the Vuni’s decided to move to Juba. It was only then that the new leadership repossessed the church property in Torit. Reverend John Moi was already in Juba and new conflict broke out between his followers and the Vuni’s. At one point it became so violent that the two groups almost attacked one another with sticks during a Sunday service (Interview with Reverend Angelo Geri: 16 July 2006).

Andrea Vuni and his sons completely lost their leadership positions. It was especially tragic for Andrea who poured his life in Christian ministry for most of his adult life. The old pioneer never became part of AIC again. Abednecho founded his own church known as Gospel Outreach Ministry Sudan in later years. Nikolao became a teacher (Wheeler 1998b:91).

6.6.7 Renewed civil war and the effect it had on AIC

Civil war erupted again in 1983. Juba was a strategic town and both sides wanted to control this gateway to the north. Eastern Equatoria again became very insecure. The Church was directly affected.

In 1984 there were AIC congregations in Torit, Lohutok, Kapoeta, Katire Gilo, Katire Ayom Obbo, Parajok, Opari, Owinykibul, Juba, Borewajak, Upper Talanga, Pogee, Rejaf and Irwoto. All the congregations felt the pressure of war and growing insecurity (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

Between 1987 and 1989 most AIC members again fled to refugee camps in Uganda. The second exodus in just more than two decades disrupted lives of thousands of Eastern Equatorians. Newly established Christian communities were uprooted and transplanted on foreign soil. Would the Church survive?

Fortunately many young people had received their spiritual formation through the vibrant churches in Juba or through those associated with it. They now helped the AIC churches to survive (Werner et al 2000:578-579).

Although AIC was a young denomination with a history of suffering and strife it still expanded to the south and north of Sudan. When thousands of Sudanese fled to Uganda in 1987 and 1989 lay believers started new congregations. Reverend John Okomu also planted a church in Adjumani and empowered others to get involved in church planting.

In 1989 AIC expanded to Khartoum. Congolese refugees founded the first AIC church in Omdurman. More congregations were established and in 1989 Reverend John Kongi was ordained to take care of the AIC congregations in Khartoum. A woman from Lohutok, Susanna Morai went to Port Sudan around 1994. She planted an AIC congregation there. In Eastern Sudan at Gadarif and Wad Kona more churches were planted (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

Juba became a centre for thousands of displaced Southerners. In 1986 Thomas Lohima moved to this strategic city where he stayed until 1994. At the time of his arrival there

were only two AIC churches in the town. One church consisted of Sudanese members while the other catered for Congolese refugees. Many displaced camps were established around Juba and AIC started to work among the displaced.

At first the work was slow. From 1992 onwards, dramatic growth occurred and many new AIC churches were planted in and around Juba. Some of the churches were at Atlabara, Nyakoron, Nakasongola, Maona North, Tenet, Merekolong, Munuki Centre, Kanal, Lologo, Bolok and Gumbo. Church growth continued until 1999. The insecurity of the war opened the hearts of the displaced people to the hope offered in the gospel (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

After his stay in Juba, Thomas Lohima moved to Nairobi. From there he conducted extensive visits to AIC congregations all over East Africa. He also continued to visit congregation members in Southern Sudan. In 1999 Reverend Lohima retired. He officially handed over the position of chairman to Reverend Andrew Wawa during the Third General Assembly in January 2000. The leadership decided to change Wawa's title from chairman to bishop. Reverend Archangelo Wani was elected as executive secretary. After only a few months he resigned due to disagreements in the executive council.

The Fourth General Assembly was held in Juba in April 2006. Bishop Wawa was again elected as leader of the AIC. Reverend John Kongi who lives in Khartoum was elected Assistant Bishop. The Assembly was conducted in a peaceful way and a review of the constitution was forwarded to a next meeting.

6.6.8 Church splits and the AIC

Church splits plagued the Church in Sudan in the past two decades. AIC did not escape. New denominations emerged through the initiatives of pastors who became disgruntled or ambitious.

In 1993 former AIC pastors founded the Evangelical Free Church in Sudan. Reverend Siricio Oromo was the leader of the AIC in SPLA-controlled areas for many years. Four pastors who worked under him namely Willam Laku, Carlo Kolong, Samuel Taban and Severino Maira decided to form their own church after disagreeing with him. They took

many AIC members with them and in time established contact with the Evangelical Free Church in America. Contact abroad secured support and made the survival of this new denomination possible (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

In 2002 Pastor Michael Saki Longo broke away after a personal disagreement with Bishop Wawa. He then started the Nile Messianic Church in Kampala. Longo's members are mainly exiled Sudanese. In 2003 Pastor Christopher Drale of AIC formed the Sudan Gospel Mission Church in Adjumani. He and the whole AIC congregation split off and even took over the AIC church building in Adjumani. They also started a church in Nimule. Drale resettled in Holland from where he visits his congregations on a yearly basis.

Reverend Siricio Oromo had in the mean time resettled in America from where he visited refugee camps in Uganda and Western Equatoria. In 2005 he started the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC). Many AIC pastors joined him. Their main reason was the promises of financial assistance. The financial promises did not materialise, as expected and only time will tell what will happen with the ELC. In 2006 Reverend Archangelo Wani also started his own church. Lack of spiritual contact with the leadership is one of the main contributors to the tumultuous recent history (Interview with Reverend Thomas Lohima: 17 July 2006).

6.6.9 Reverend Angelo Geri and his role in AIC, NSCC and Open Doors

Angelo Geri is at present a colleague of the author. The following section is the result of an interview with him that took place on 16 July 2006.

Geri began his ministry as a youth leader in Juba. He received the opportunity to study at Daystar University in Kenya through a scholarship of SCC. After his return to Sudan he became the first organiser of the Joined Evangelistic Team project better known as JET. He started to work in Ugandan refugee camps like Adjumani and Kiriadongo. In 1994 the AIC leadership decided to send Geri to Ikotos and Kitgum to run a relief program for the church.

There were several AIC churches in the area, but they had no trained leaders. The deficiency was addressed by the introduction of a local training program. Geri organised a

leadership-training seminar in Ikotos in November 1994. The idea was to give church leaders of the local congregations in SPLA-controlled areas basic training in discipleship. Twenty-one pastors and evangelists attended the two-week seminar.

During the evaluation participants expressed a strong desire for more training. Reverend Siricio Oromo was the AIC chairman of the SPLA-controlled areas at the time. He made contact with George Bezuidenhout who served in Sudan with Frontline Fellowship. Oromo requested Bezuidenhout to visit Ikotos. Bezuidenhout complied. He met with Geri and the group of church leaders he had recently trained.

An official request was made to Bezuidenhout to start a theological training program for AIC church leaders. Bezuidenhout returned to Kenya where he was approached by Open Doors. They wanted him to manage their projects in Southern Sudan. He accepted the offer and thus became the first full-time employee of Open Doors in Southern Sudan. In February 1996 Bezuidenhout started to train five AIC pastors using the TTI curriculum. Angelo Geri was one of the five.

Starting a training program during the war years was challenging. Ikotos, where the first teaching took place, was unstable. Government Antonov planes regularly dropped bombs on the town. It severely disrupted classes. Once, an Antonov unexpectedly dropped bombs in the AIC compound. At first the students thought it was a relief plane, but they were rudely surprised. Everybody fell flat as they were showered with dust. One bomb fell only metres away from the watchmen. He miraculously escaped death. The students experienced the fact that no one was injured as God's protection and as a sign of his care for them. Due to the bombing the class was moved to Imatong and later to Luhotok and Lafus.

Geri and his fellow AIC pastors finished their studies in 1997. After graduation the next year Geri made a career move. He became the compound manager of New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) in Lokichoggio.

Geri remained interested in theological training and networking. While working in Lokichoggio his family stayed in Nairobi. During a visit he met with Reverend Oliver Soma of SPC. The latter saw Geri's TTI-modules and asked if his denomination could receive

similar training. Geri brought him in contact with Bezuidenhout. A short time later TTI classes were started in Kaya (12 students), Kajo-Keji (11 students) and Yambio (12 students).

In the mean time the work of Open Doors in Southern Sudan expanded so much that Bezuidenhout realized he needed assistance. In March 2000 the author and his wife joined the Open Doors-team in Southern Sudan. Angelo Geri was also approached to help. He became the third full-time Open Doors worker in August 2000. He is still working as tutor, logistician, flight coordinator and researcher for Open Doors in Southern Sudan.

6.6.10 Theological training in Imatong

On 19 July 2006 the author had an interview with Romano Oguma of AIC. Oguma supplied me with the information given in the following section.

Shortly after his conversion in 1998 Romano became involved in the AIC youth leadership. He joined the BTCP training program in Kiriandongo refugee camp in Uganda in order to gain a firm theological foundation. Unfortunately the training program fizzled out after some time. Tito Abaha was another upcoming AIC-leader. He and Romano became close friends. Tito went for studies at Scott Theological College in 1999. A while later Romano went to Nairobi to study at Bethany Christian College.

During holiday times Romano and Tito went to Ikotos and surrounding areas where they conducted evangelism and discipleship. New converts were made during the short-term outreaches. Romano and Tito did not want to leave them without guidance. When Tito graduated in 2003 he and Romano reflected on the future. They decided to open a discipleship-training centre for local church leaders and evangelists. Since there was already an AIC compound at Lohutok they used the facilities and opened a Bible training program. Romano finished his studies in 2004 and the two leaders started their training.

Their first class consisted of twenty students with Romano and Tito being the teachers. Romano and Tito's training program became known as Isomau Bible School. Isomau means doubtful in the Lopit language. The name was chosen because many people

doubted that the training institute would survive. After it had proven itself the name was changed to Thomas Bible School. Tito and Romano chose the name in honour of Reverend Thomas Lohima who played an important role in AIC's history. He was also the first convert in the Lohutok area.

Training was done in partnership with other Christian groups. African Leadership provided material for the training while Norwegian Church Aid gave funds for food. Barnabas Fund donated money for the construction of buildings. Other organisations like Project Persecution Fund and Open Doors also became involved. The Thomas Bible School is a good example of how local initiative was strengthened by non-Sudanese groups without the latter taking over control of the project.

In 2004 the first group of students graduated. Four of the initial twenty students did not finish their studies. A new intake of thirty students started their studies in 2005. They will finish in December 2006. Tito and Romano realized that they had to adapt the material to fit the level and context of their students. They have been involved in a curriculum writing workshop arranged by Open Doors and will start to use the newly developed material in the near future.

6.7 Sudan Interior Church (SIC)

6.7.1 From a missionary led church to an indigenous denomination

SIM missionaries never planted huge churches in Sudan. They opened a few stations and desired the "fruit of their labour" to develop into strong indigenous churches. In some instances missionaries had the desire to form Christian communities based on Biblical principals, but in actual fact tried to make Sudanese believers conform to Western Christian values (see Chapter 5.6.1). It proved to be a failure.

In 1963 SIM realized that their time in the South was short. They therefore approved a constitution for the churches and called all the congregations together the Church in the East Central Sudan (Werner et al 2000:459). It seemed the missionaries initially had the intention of controlling their daughter church from the SIM headquarters in Khartoum.

Time was short indeed. In 1964 all missionaries were compelled to leave. Two SIM missionaries, Mary Beam and Betty Cridland stayed at Chali al Fil as long as possible. They feared for the future of their small flock of 224 local believers. Paul Rasha Angwo was the only pastor and had to take care of believers while ominous clouds of oppression and even persecution appeared on the horizon (Arensen 1998:82).

Just before the departure of the missionary ladies a truck loaded with copies of the Uduk translation of the New Testament arrived. The translation was vital in helping believers to develop their own understanding of Christianity.

At first the missionary initiated Christian villages ceased to exist when there were no missionaries to enforce the rules. Then believers developed their own understanding of what it meant to be a Christian. The result was a vigorous Uduk church. Arensen writes: "This Christian message, no longer connected to western values, appealed to the Uduk and soon many started becoming Christians. These Uduk were not becoming Christians because of the benefits of western medicine, employment or education ... they were becoming Christians because there were aspects of Christianity that met their spiritual needs" (1998:82-83).

In 1967 Pastor Paul Rasha Angwo baptized 526 new believers in one day! At the end of the twentieth century it was estimated that more than eighty percent of the Uduk tribe had embraced Christianity (Arensen 1998:83).

6.7.2 A leader paying the highest price

As it was so often the case in church history faithful believers had to face severe persecution. It was also true for Sudanese Christians in the 1960's. Gideon Adwok Deng lived in Melut. He and Paul Rasha Angwo were the only remaining SIC pastors in Southern Sudan. Adwok Deng served his people together with the elders Simon Anyang and William Olyew. In April 1964 General Irwa who ordered all church leaders to gather for a meeting called him to Malakal. General Irwa uttered dark threats against the Sudanese church leadership. It did not stop Adwok Deng to return to Melut where he continued his ministry (Werner et al 2000:396-397).

In the mean time the Anya-nya rebel movement had gained momentum and at some point it was reported that guerrilla soldiers were in the vicinity of Melut. This made the government officials and soldiers nervous and suspicious of anybody who might assist the rebels.

Adwok Deng and his elders must have been suspected because on 15 August 1964 they were arrested. On 18 August all three of them were shot. Whether this happened because they were Christian leaders or only because they were suspected to be collaborating with the Anya-nya fighters cannot be said for sure. However, it is a fact that the soldiers were especially rough with Christians in that area (Anderson1998: 194-195).

6.7.3 Emergence of a Southern Sudanese SIC in the refugee camps

All information in the sections below (6.7.3-6.7.9) came from two interviews with Saphano Riak of SIC on 14 and 21 July 2006. Where other sources were used it will be indicated.

According to a report by SIM, 38 SIC churches existed in Sudan in 1986. Twenty preaching points were also in the first stages of developing into churches (www.sim.org 4 July 06). Most Sudanese believers that worshiped under the banner of SIC belonged to the Dinka Padang, Mabaan and Uduk tribes. It must be mentioned that most of the churches existed in government controlled areas.

SIM reports: "In 1987, however, the civil war spread into the areas in which SIC churches were functioning. As the people fled in every direction, they re-established churches in the towns of the North where they settled temporarily. Some were displaced to the far south of the country where they established churches near the border with Uganda. They crossed as refugees into Kenya where they established one church ..." (www.sim.org 4 July 06)

The emergence of SIC in Southern Sudan was however not such a simple event. Many Christians had to leave their home areas and often became separated from their leaders as they settled in refugee camps. When SIC church members went to refugee camps in Ethiopia there were no ordained SIC leaders to take care of them. No SIC leader from

Khartoum came to establish SIC in either the refugee camps or the SPLA liberated areas. What followed was a spontaneous movement.

Dinka Padang believers came together in the refugee camp at Itang under the leadership of Simon Deng Awuol of PCOS. They decided to construct a Dinka Padang church that would serve believers from both the PCOS and SIC. The arrangement was implemented in 1987 and continued until 1990.

In 1990 an elder of SIC in Upper Nile, Philip Nyok came to Itang. He was accompanied by another strong SIC member, Moses Akon Bet. At that time SIC had already established its own congregation in Itang due to church politics. The SIC congregation continued to meet until the fall of Mengistu. Then all Sudanese refugees were evicted.

When all Sudanese refugees were forced to leave Ethiopia in 1991, SIC members became scattered once again. Many went to Nasir while others settled in Pochalla. From Pochalla many people moved on to the two Equatoria provinces. At first no SIC congregations were established in the areas where the SIC members settled after leaving Ethiopia. The group that went to the Equatorial provinces again joined up with PCOS.

Due to political reasons the Dinka Padang believers in the PCOS churches were cut off from the Nuer PCOS leadership. The leadership lived in Nuer areas and in Nairobi. After the split in the SPLA animosity between Dinka and Nuer further complicated the matter. In 1993 the leader of the Dinka Padang churches in Equatoria, Simon Bieth wrote to the PCOS moderator in Nairobi. He asked for assistance in terms of pastoral care. The reply they received was very discouraging. Instead of receiving warmth and sympathy the PCOS moderator replied that he is not aware of any PCOS members in Equatoria. If there were any they had to leave Equatoria and go to Akobo.

When the Dinka Padang believers received this hard response they decided to leave PCOS. They then formed the SIC of Southern Sudan. Their reason for starting SIC congregations was because their spiritual roots could be traced back to SIM. During the colonial era SIM missionaries started missionary work in Eastern Upper Nile. They then gave their mission centre in Abwong to AM. Through the agreement between the missionaries the Sudanese converts in the area became Presbyterian.

While Simon Bieth led the new SIC members in Southern Sudan John Aben led Dinka Padang believers in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. John Aben was still with PCOS. After Bieth had informed him about their return to SIC, John Aben with his followers decided to do the same.

Doctor Haruun was the chairman of NSCC and the new SIC leaders approached him for help. While he had lived in Sudan he had served as a SIC pastor. It was only after his studies in America that he joined the Presbyterian Church of United States of America. Doctor Haruun visited Kakuma and Atepi in 1993 and connected the new SIC congregations with Torchbearers in Austria. Torchbearers already had links with SIC in Melut.

6.7.4 SIC growth in Southern Sudan

After Dinka Padang Christians had founded the first SIC congregation in Atepi Refugee Camp they began to do active evangelism. They planted another church in Aswa. When the so-called Tripple A camps were evacuated in 1994, SIC church members from Aswa went to Mogali Displaced Camp. Those who had lived in Atepi went to Labone. The believers who went to Labone did aggressive evangelism. It led to the planting of yet another church in New Kush. New Kush in turn planted another church in Narus.

After John Aben and his followers had joined SIC they established a congregation in Kakuma One. Kakuma Refugee Camp expanded all the time and was later divided into three sections namely Kakuma One, Two and Three. Like their colleagues in Southern Sudan, John Aben's group did active evangelism. The result was that a second SIC congregation was established in Kakuma Three.

At this point SIC in Southern Sudan and in Kakuma had no trained pastors. Torchbearers visited the displaced camps at Labone and Kakuma in 1994. After the visit they wrote to Doctor Haruun and asked him to assist the developing group of leaders. He had to bring the lay preachers together so that they could officially form a leadership for SIC in Southern Sudan. Doctor Haruun requested the SIC leadership in Khartoum to send a copy of the SIC constitution to the congregations. Since he was part of NSCC he said he

could not come to the meeting. Instead he organized for Reuben Abiel of PCOS to become the caretaker of the young SIC congregations. Abiel was an ordained pastor and a Dinka Padang. Abiel went to New Kush in March 1996 where all the SIC leaders of the congregations in the South gathered together. They elected a new leadership.

Doctor Haruun was elected chairman, but later he declined due to his many responsibilities with NSCC. Saphano Riak Chol was elected executive secretary and Yonan Jacob from SCOC became the vice-chairman. In March 1997 John Aben was elected as chairman. His executive committee consisted of two members from each congregation (Labone, Mogali, Nimule, New Kush and Kakuma).

6.7.5 Leadership training

After the new SIC leadership had been elected they contacted Torchbearers in Lokichoggio and requested for the training of their leaders. Peter Wiegand of Torchbearers went to Khartoum to receive the endorsement of the mother-church on behalf of the SIC executive committee in Kakuma. He went with all the important documents of how SIC came into being in the South as well as information about the leaders and the needs of the young church. SIC in Khartoum came to Kakuma in May 1998 and an agreement was made. The leaders of the South would be ordained after finishing their training.

Torchbearers conducted a course in pastoral care and elders training. The training started in Narus in May 1998. Church leaders who attended the pastoral care and elders training knew about the immense spiritual need in Southern Blue Nile and Mabaan area. They therefore requested Torchbearers and the SIC leadership to give attention to these areas. As a result a Bible Week was organized in Yabus in March 2000. During the Bible Week the idea of starting more in depth leadership training in the area was born.

The training of Torchbearers mainly targeted elders and Open Doors was therefore approached to train a group of pastors. Open Doors agreed and began to train the six pastors who were elected for ordination. TTI's material that consisted of thirty modules was used as the basic curriculum. The training took place between 1998 and 2000 in Narus, Kakuma and Lokichoggio.

Open Doors decided to train the pastors in stages. It would allow students to return to Kakuma, New Kush and Labone where they were responsible for small groups of SIC members. The six men were also active in evangelism. Those who came to Christ through the evangelistic efforts were disciplined and incorporated in existing churches. Evangelistic outreaches to Upper Nile and Blue Nile were high on the priority list of the newly established leadership.

6.7.6 Students becoming tutors

After their graduation four of the students became TTI-tutors. Thomas Gieth conducted a class in Khorfulus while John Aben started one in Abwong. Francis Ayul and Saphano Riak taught together in Yabus. All the areas are remote and living conditions are difficult measured by any standards.

The author had the privilege to teach occasionally at Yabus. Many of the students who attended the class in Yabus had remarkable stories. Moses Akonbet Ajing for instance was in charge of the SIC churches in SPLA controlled areas in Melut region. The churches requested Bibles from the leaders in Khartoum. Ajing personally went to Khartoum and received the Bibles. From there it was taken to Renk and from Renk the Bibles were transported by boat to Melut. In Melut somebody must have seen how Ajing off-loaded the boxes of Bibles. The informer went to the army barracks and reported that Ajing was taking ammunition to the SPLA. He was promptly arrested and pressurized to renounce his faith. The soldiers even placed a knife on his throat. In spite of the seriousness of the situation Ajing refused to deny Christ.

William Fella is a Mabaan church leader. He was also threatened with death when he refused to deny his Saviour. A government soldier pushed an automatic rifle into his face and started to count to ten. He warned Fella that he would kill the latter at the count of ten if he did not deny Christ. Fella refused. The soldier then lifted his gun slightly and pulled the trigger. The bullet went over William's head and the soldier walked away. Fella's traumatic experience served to strengthen his faith instead of breaking it as was the clear intention.

6.7.7 Evangelism in Koma Ghanza

Saphano Riak and Francis Ayul arranged for an evangelistic outreach to Koma Ghanza in 2003. Koma Ghanza is a few hours' walking distance from Yabus. They were touched by the spiritual need since where very little spiritual work had been done there. SIM worked in the area in the early nineteen sixties. Their efforts resulted in the conversion of only three people. By the time Ayul and Riak went to Koma Ghanza they found two of the converts still alive. Unfortunately they had become backslidden. For many years they had no spiritual nourishment in their isolated home area.

The interest of the local inhabitants was great during the time of the outreach and many professed conversion. According to reports several so-called converts reverted to their old ways when they realized there was no material benefit for them in converting to Christ. Others, however, continued in their newfound faith. Three SIC churches were planted and Evangelist Yohannes is taking charge of the members' pastoral care.

6.7.8 Tension in the SIC leadership

Ramadan Chan of SIC Khartoum came to Nairobi in 1998 for further studies. He was sponsored by SIM with the understanding that he would become the principal of Gideon Theological College (GTC) in Khartoum as well as the director of the translation team of the Dinka Padang translation project.

Chan was not yet involved in the SIC leadership of Southern Sudan by the time of his arrival in Nairobi. After his graduation some people in SIC Southern Sudan approached him. They asked him to become part of the leadership and he accepted. When SIC in Khartoum saw that Chan had no plans of returning to Khartoum they released him to assist the leadership of SIC in Southern Sudan.

In the mean time the six SIC pastors had finished their training with Open Doors. They eagerly awaited their ordination. SIC in Khartoum, however, was in the middle of a leadership crisis. The key leaders said they could not come for the ordination, but would ask Doctor Haruun to do it on their behalf. He agreed and requested the candidates to

prepare themselves. Torchbearers in Austria sponsored the pre-ordination seminar in Lokichoggio. The ordination ceremony was scheduled for 21 May 2001.

Then the first problems occurred that would later tear SIC in Southern Sudan apart. Without the knowledge of the candidates Ramadan Chan had discussions with Doctor Haruun persuading him to call off the ordination. Doctor Haruun consented and the ordination was postponed until further planning. With increasing frustration the candidates wanted to know why the previous promises were not honoured. The reply they received was that their training was not residential and not on the standard required for SIC ordination.

While a leadership struggle intensified Francis Ayul and Saphano Riak went for further studies at Scott Theological College in Kenya. Riak finished in July 2006 and Ayul will complete his degree course in July 2007. Their advanced training would nullify the allegation that they do not have the education required for ordination in SIC. Hopefully they can be instrumental in solving the struggle in the top leadership.

Another reason given why candidates could not be ordained was that the TTI curriculum conflicted with the doctrine of SIC. The students, who underwent the training, strongly denied it. It seems there was an informal discussion on baptism that caused Reverend Chan to suspect false doctrines were taught.

Tension mounted. Allegations were made by the leaders of SIC in Southern Sudan that the new arrangements were in contradiction to the earlier agreement made with the SIC leadership in Khartoum. The whole issue was taken to Khartoum. Family connections between Reverend Chan and certain key leaders in Khartoum led the SIC leadership there to retract their earlier agreement of 1997.

6.7.9 Deepening divisions and a threatening split

There was more than one struggle going on in SIC. In May 2002 a General Assembly was held in Lokichoggio by the SIC of Southern Sudan. Internal struggles between some of

the leaders resulted in the election of Reverend Ramadan Chan as General Secretary. There was a group of church leaders who opposed the ordination of the TTI students for reasons known to them. They sided with Reverend Chan and wanted him to have a position with executive powers. The election favoured Chan and he received sweeping powers within the SIC of Southern Sudan.

Paradoxically the delegates to pursue the ordination of the proposed candidates mandated Reverend Chan. He agreed, but added that he first needed recommendation from the districts where the candidates came from. Ordination would then take place with the next General Assembly in June 2004.

At the General Assembly in 2004 recommendations were given by the district leaders for the ordination of the group of pastors who had completed the TTI course. Again it was postponed to the next General Assembly planned for 2006. The postponements brought such frustration that a number of SIC leaders left the Assembly and elected their own leadership. At a certain point physical violence was barely averted.

Pastor John Aben reacted in frustration and ordained eleven leaders as SIC-pastors. He did it in Kakuma in August 2004. Except for Thomas Gieth not one of the eleven leaders was part of the original group of candidates.

Accusations and counter-accusations flew between the two opposing groups. It finally necessitated a mediation team of SIC in Khartoum to come to Nairobi. A meeting was arranged for October 2004 where the mediating team met with leaders from the two rival groups. It resulted in superficial reconciliation. An agreement was made that the five year term of the General Secretary would be shortened to four years. The ordination of the eleven pastors was also nullified. Pastor John Aben was put under suspension for three months. He accepted.

Unfortunately the eleven pastors did not accept the new arrangements. They accused the mediating team of being biased. Pastor John Aben experienced great difficulty in persuading them to comply with the advice given by the mediation team. He largely failed in his efforts and the eleven pastors with their followers continued as a separate group. Matters became so complex that a number of the leaders went over to PCOS, EPC and

URC in 2005. Fortunately Saphano Riak, John Aben and others arranged for another reconciliation meeting in September 2005. The meeting was successful and several leaders accepted the nullification of their ordination. They also accepted to remain in SIC unconditionally.

In April 2006 the Third General Assembly was scheduled to take place in Thiangrial in Northern Upper Nile. There were high hopes for a new beginning. Then tribal conflict between Southern Blue Nile and Upper Nile prevented the Mabaan delegates to attend. It led to the postponement of the General Assembly even though many delegates were already gathered at Thiangrial. Reverend Ramadan Chan did not attend the meeting, but due to the postponement he retained his position as General Secretary. Currently he is busy with his doctoral studies in theology in Nairobi.

Leadership issues continue to strain relationships. There will be no changes until a next General Assembly is convened where elections can be held. Since peace came to Sudan a merge between SIC in Southern Sudan and SIC in Khartoum is a possibility. It is a sensitive matter that will need much wise discussion.

6.7.10 Statistics on SIC in North and South Sudan

SIM has the following report on SIC statistics: “Between the North and South, including some of the Sudanese refugees in other countries, 255 fully organized SIC churches are in existence. These churches are composed of about 51,000 baptized members with 29 pastors and 39 evangelists (www.sim.org 4 July 2006). Most of the above mentioned statistics refer to SIC in the north of Sudan. In the south there are several efforts by unordained church leaders to plant new churches in remote areas. The ministry of these zealous leaders with little say in the top structures may very well provide the backbone for SIC in Southern Sudan.

6.8 Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC)

6.8.1 Last days of the SUM missionaries in the Nuba Mountains

The Sudanese Church of Christ (SCOC) emerged from the work of the Sudan United Mission. When SUM decided not to sign the Missionary Societies Act in 1962 they were forced to leave Sudan at the end of the year (Werner et al 2000:430). By the time the last missionaries departed only Samwiil Jangul and his father-in-law, Istafaanuus, were ordained pastors.

In a document to the authorities just prior to their departure SUM leaders wrote to the government that: “The Church of Christ of the Nuba Mountains is an indigenous body of Sudanese organised under its own leadership” (quoted by Spartalis 1981:155). Samwiil Jangul was elected as the chairman of the Nuba Church Council with Gwuko Ibrahim Kauda the secretary and Galla Komi the treasurer.

6.8.2 Harassment and church growth under the leadership of Samwiil Jangul

The Nuba Mountains is the first area in Sudan inhabited by Africans when moving southward from Khartoum. It therefore made the region the focus of the government’s policy of Islamization and Arabization. Several Nuba tribes accepted the Muslim faith. Others, however, turned to Christianity.

After the missionaries’ departure the Sudanese believers faced a lot of harassment. Government officials tried to pressurize Pastor Samwiil to sign the Missionary Societies Act. He refused because he knew it would hinder the work of the Church very much. In order to understand the seriousness of the document it is appropriate to quote extracts from it (as quoted by Spartalis 1981:151-152).

No missionary society or any member thereof shall do any missionary act in the Sudan except in accordance with the terms of a licence granted by the Council of Ministers. Such licence shall be in the prescribed form and shall specify the religion, sect, or belief of the missionary society and the regions or places in which it may operate and in addition may impose

whatever conditions the Council of Ministers may think fit either generally or in any specific case ... The Council of Ministers may refuse to grant or renew a licence if it thinks that the grant or renewal of a licence will be detrimental to the public peace or public interest ... No missionary society shall bring up in any religion or admit to any religious order, any person under the age of 18 years without the consent of his lawful guardian. Such consent shall be reduced to writing.

Nuba Christians and especially the leaders had to face increasing pressure from the side of the government. Church buildings were confiscated. The Shwai Bible School was closed down and evangelists received threats. All the pressure did not destroy the young SUM-congregations. Spertalis writes: "... despite or because of opposition, the Nuba Church continued to grow and grow" (1981:163).

When the Shwai Bible School was closed down the annual Bible courses became the new source of church growth. Conwell quotes the following letter from Pastor Samwill (1985:91).

I sent messages to all the churches to send their pastors, evangelists and elders to meet me at a certain place, in the middle of August. They all came on time. It was a time of devotion and studies. The Holy Spirit started to work more openly among the Christians and leaders of the Sudanese Church of Christ. From that time up till now the Bible Courses have been a great blessing to all the churches. Through the Bible Courses many new churches have been founded

An interview the author had with Pastor Samwill on November 2002 confirmed the significance of the above-mentioned annual meetings. Pastor Samwill remembered how key leaders from all the congregations would gather for a week to discuss, meditate upon and pray over a certain topic. After this time of fellowship and teaching the leaders would go back to their congregations and shared their newly gained insight and enthusiasm with their members. Many hundreds of Nuba people accepted Christ as a direct result of the Bible Courses and backsliders embraced their faith with fresh zeal.

Christmas was another time that believers would use for evangelism. They would go from village to village, singing and preaching wherever they went.

Samwiil Jangul's contribution in keeping the believers together through his tireless visits cannot be overemphasized. Spertalis recognizes how hard it was for Jangul to keep the young church going forward: "Pastor Samwiil carried on a strenuous, almost crippling round of pastoral visitations, conference addresses and consultations with colleagues and government officials" (1981:163). Just before a scheduled meeting in Kharthoum in 1964 he cycled about 200 miles around Nuba Mountains visiting all the SCOC congregations. The author had to travel by bicycle for about 40 miles in the same area and can attest that the rugged terrain makes such a venture extremely exhausting.

Conwell gives a glimpse on how Jangul's efforts paid off: "The believers from all sections of the Nuba Mountains have graciously given him their loyalty from the earliest days until the present time. That loyalty has been won, not by any dictatorial attitude, but by a gracious and humble spirit that continually gave of itself and expected little in return" (1985:85).

The young church under Pastor Samwiil's leadership continued to experience pressure and disappointments. Theological differences concerning baptism led to dissension and division. Although Pastor Samwiil was bitterly disappointed by certain leaders he stayed with his convictions. He also did not allow himself to be drawn into fruitless discussions. Eventually the Moro district where the dissension occurred became the strongest SCOC area in all the Nuba Mountains.

In November 1967 Pastor Samwiil was imprisoned for a short time because he supplied the Nuba people with Christian literature. The overworked leader suffered from severe migraine and urgently needed people who could share his many responsibilities with him.

6.8.3 Ordination, opposition and financial challenges

Answers to Pastor Samwiil's prayers for assistance came when a certain Korniluuus was ordained in May 1964. He was the first pastor to be ordained by the SCOC leadership and not by missionaries. In 1967 Adam Kuku was also ordained after the church in Heiban

requested it. The next two pastors who received ordination in 1969 were Kapirma Bashir and Kwedi Bashir. Both men were from the Moro district. Kapirma became known as Pastor Suliman Bashir. By 1971 there were an estimated 2000 SCOC members, five ordained pastors, seven accredited evangelists and three candidates for ordination (Spartalis1981:175).

SCOC grew tremendously in the Moro district. Traditional believers resented the strong Christian presence and several churches were burnt down. Conwell describes that the opposition failed to discourage believers. He writes: "For every church burnt down, three or four more would be built, and soon they were filled to capacity" (1985:96).

During the ordination of Kornilius, Pastor Samwiil "... wisely told the church they would have pastors to care for them, when they were prepared to care for the needs of the pastors" (Conwell 1985:105). The importance of self-supporting churches in Sudan must be emphasized. In many ways relative self-support preserved SCOC from the danger of relying on external funding for church growth. Dependence on financial help from abroad often has a crippling effect on churches in developing countries and financial independence in the initial phases of SCOC's history helped them to grow in spite of their little contact with the outside world. Pastor Kapirma could write the following in 1966: "The baptized and those who have made a stand for Christ help pay the evangelists' salaries and that of Rev. Samwiil" (quoted by Spartalis 1981:166).

However, financial difficulties drained the energies of full-time church leaders who struggled to make ends meet. It eventually led Pastor Samwiil to write an open letter to the SUM Fellowship in Australia and New Zealand (quoted by Spartalis 1981:169-170).

Before I decided to write to you I took a whole year to pray to the Lord to show me the right thing to do ... I know it is not wise for a pastor to get his full support outside his church, which is a shameful thing for the Church to do. Over past years I worked hard on farms in order to support my living, but I found two things: First both my knees became painful ... Second I found myself become careless to do the Lord's work. I began to forget my duty as a pastor ... All these came because I gave much time to earn my

living ... I am ashamed to write to you about my living but there is no way,
only I have to ask you

Sympathetic supporters did what they could and helped Pastor Samwiil to retain his focus on the ministry. Financial support was offered to help pastors and evangelists. Money was furthermore sent for training of urgently needed leaders and for the leper patients at Nyakma. Private scholarships by missionaries who previously worked in the Nuba Mountains enabled promising young men to further their education in North Sudan.

6.8.4 Exposure to Nigeria

SUM missionaries working in Nigeria and Chad shared the circumstances of SCOC in the Nuba Mountains with national church leaders. They showed a great eagerness to help their brothers. In 1971 Pastor Samwiil was invited to visit Nigeria. He visited SUM stations and churches. He was very much encouraged by what he saw. He also resolved to develop SCOC along the same lines of what he saw in the Nigerian churches (Conwell 1985:110-112).

A highlight of Pastor Samwiil's time in Nigeria was his visit to the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. He received an open invitation to send any candidates for training. In 1977 three SCOC leaders namely John Tell, Philip Kuku and Adam Kuku were sent to study theology for four years.

The Evangelical Church of Christ in Nigeria (TEKAN) decided to become involved in the Nuba Mountains. Since they had trained leprosy workers TEKAN became interested in the leprosy work started by Roy Conwell. Doctor Conwell had established a leper clinic and compound at Nyakma in the Nuba Mountains. Like all the other SUM missionaries he had to leave the area in 1962. In December 1973 he succeeded in visiting the compound where he found everything in disrepair. In Khartoum a certain Miss Karen brought Conwell in contact with Doctor Ali Idriess. Doctor Idriess assured Conwell that the Sudan government was open to leprosy work in the Nuba Mountains.

SUM missionaries of the Australia – New Zealand branch made the many needs of SCOC known to their SUM colleagues in Nigeria. They extended an official invitation to David

Carling who was the Chief Medical Superintendent of SUM in Nigeria. Carling in turn took the invitation to the Nigerian church leadership. The Nigerian leaders accepted it. Malam Bitrus Pam was the General Secretary of TEKAN. He wrote in 1974: “As you know the TEKAN Plateau is a missionary minded church – it has been since its formation over twenty years ago ... The idea of the Nuba Mountains outreach, therefore, is a welcomed one” (quoted by Spartalis 1981:180-181).

In February 1975 Malam Bitrus Pam, David Carling and Roy Conwell visited the Nuba Mountains, Omdurman and Khartoum. They met with several key SCOC leaders. The result was the establishment of the Sudan Outreach Programme (SOP).

SOP helped the Nuba Church in areas of great need. It was instrumental in the founding of Gideon Theological College in Melut and the training of Nuba pastors in Nigeria. Other important ventures were the Leprosy Control Project and the placing of a pastor for SCOC believers in Omdurman. They also helped to develop SCOC, which was a rural church into a city church as well (Spartalis 1981:183).

6.8.5 On to Khartoum

Several factors in the early nineteen-seventies made it necessary for SCOC to establish its headquarters in Khartoum. Many young Nuba men and women had drifted to the three towns of Omdurman, Khartoum North and Khartoum. They went in search of education and employment. A number of Christians joined the throng and it was not long before they requested for a pastor to take care of their spiritual needs.

Nigerian leprosy control workers coming to work at Nyakma in the Nuba Mountains needed a proper administrative centre. Communication with the wider Christian world resulted in funds being sent from abroad. In order to administrate finances and ensure good communication it became necessary for SCOC to establish itself in the capital city (Conwell 1985:124-125).

It fell on the shoulders of Pastor Samwiil to lead SCOC in Omdurman. It was not an easy decision for him to move from the rural surroundings of the Nuba Mountains to the capital city. He became convinced that it was God's will and therefore complied. Life in Omdurman

was difficult, but Pastor Samwiil again made a huge contribution to provide pastoral guidance where it was most needed. Roy Conwell writes: “On the outskirts of Omdurman was a small compound enclosed by mud walls. Inside was a two-roomed mud walled house ... Quickly his little compound became the meeting place for all and sundry. The physically and spiritually ill came to him for help. The poor came for food and the lonely for friendship. His house was always full.” (1985:127). In 1979 a more adequate compound became available and Pastor Samwiil and his family could enjoy more privacy and “luxury”.

SCOC churches in the predominantly Muslim capital city of Khartoum grew and it was not uncommon to find up to 500 believers in one congregation. Plans for a church headquarters were already drawn in 1975, but the actual building was only completed in 1984. The headquarters is still in use today.

Pastor Samwiil continued to play a vital role in developing SCOC into a city church. He had many responsibilities, but it never stopped him from giving enthusiastic guidance. He and other leaders believed in the power of the Bible and therefore held Bible teaching programs on Fridays. The result was that “SCOC youth were probably better grounded in Christian life and faith than in other Church communities where such thorough programs were not commonly available” (Wheeler 2000:471).

6.8.6 Theological training and the founding of Gideon Theological College in Melut

Pastor Samwiil gave everything he had in order to build others. At last the opportunity came for him to receive spiritual refreshment. In 1976 he was sponsored to study at the Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership Training in Singapore. The studies were very valuable to him. It helped him strengthen his focus on developing a trained leadership for his people.

Many years earlier the clear need for trained evangelists led to the opening of the W L Mills Memorial Bible School at Shwai. This happened in 1959. The Bible School became an important training centre for Sudanese evangelists in the Nuba Mountains. Initially Pastor Samwiil was the vice-principal, but in a short time he became the principal. Apart from his many duties as principal Pastor Samwiil taught several courses. From the very beginning he valued the training of local leaders and saw it as a priority task (Conwell 1985:76-78).

In 1962 government officials closed down the Bible School. Although it was a severe blow at the time the church leadership found other ways of strengthening elders and evangelists. However Pastor Samwiil never lost his vision of establishing a similar centre or to re-open the Shwai Bible School when possible.

As was previously mentioned many Nuba Christians had moved to the Three Towns that comprised Khartoum. Darrell Wellings a SIM missionary who stayed in Khartoum started an evening Bible School in Omdurman, but it had to be closed down due to a lack of staff.

The urgent need of trained local leaders weighed heavily on Pastor Samwiil's heart. Four evangelists were sent for training at the American Mission's School in Khartoum North. Two of them went to the Nuba Mountains after the completion of their studies while the other two ministered in Khartoum. Still trained church leaders remained an urgent but unfulfilled need.

Pastor Samwiil rejoiced when Doctor Haruun Ruun of SIC became convinced of the need for theological training after touring the SIC areas between 1970 and 1972 (Spartalis 183). Haruun was one of Pastor Samwiil's students at the Shwai Bible School and now they planned together on how to establish similar training institutes.

In 1974 Harold Walker opened another evening school for the training of evangelists in Omdurman. He eventually developed a program that would allow students to study for six months and work in their village churches the other half of the year. The training institute became known as the Omdurman Evangelists' School. Ten Nuba evangelists received training in the first two years.

Growing demand made it necessary for the leaders of the training institute to find more permanent training facilities. They also remembered the fact that most of the evangelists would work in rural areas. Suggestions were made to move the Omdurman Evangelists' School to Melut.

At first Pastor Samwiil wanted to revive the Bible School at Shwai. It soon became clear that such a venture would not be possible. He then considered the possibility of opening a new facility at Abri. That, however, was also unrealistic due to financial and other problems.

Doctor Haruun Ruun then urged Pastor Samwiil to join the Melut venture and he finally accepted (Spartalis 1981:183-185).

Gideon Theological College (GTC) opened its doors in May 1978. It was named after the martyred SIC pastor, Gideon Adwok Deng. There were 10 Nuba students in the first class. The first graduation took place in December 1979. “On virtually the same spot as where Pastor Gideon fell fourteen years ago, the Sudanese evangelists were commended to God and His service” (Spartalis 1981:201).

When civil war erupted again in 1983, insecurity made it necessary for GTC to be transferred to Omdurman. The move took place in 1984. It continued to play a strategic role in the formation of SCOC and SIC leaders. The trained leaders in turn impacted their communities (Wheeler 2000:468).

The author visited GTC in May 2006. It was encouraging to meet the Sudanese staff and to see the enthusiasm of many students. A well-stocked library is properly utilized.

6.8.7 War breaks out again

With the collapse of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement and the continuance of the civil war the Church in the Nuba Mountains entered a very difficult time. Christians were accused of supporting the SPLA. It resulted in harassment by government security forces. Village churches were regularly burnt down and church leaders suffered great persecution. Many believers fled to northern towns. Through all their trials most believers did not forsake their faith in God.

Christians who lived in the areas under SPLA-control had more opportunity to develop their faith than their brothers and sisters in the north. Christian leaders did not only face problems from the government's side. They also had to stand their ground in local nationalistic gatherings. The Religious Tolerance Conference held in December 1994 in Tongole is a point in case (Werner et al 2000:614-615). The meeting was convened in an effort to preserve Nuba culture. The organizers said that the people who lived in the Nuba Mountains were Nubas first and only then Muslims, Christians or traditional believers.

SCOC leaders came under pressure when they differed from the generally accepted view. They appreciated the efforts of political and religious leaders to preserve Nuba culture and to promote unity in the area but could not accept the lengths to which the efforts went. SCOC-leaders placed a priority on their identity as Christians. This made them unpopular and resulted in strained relationships for many years to come.

The resolute stance and continuous efforts of the SCOC leaders to promote harmonious cooperation gained them the respect of several political leaders. Eventually some political and military leaders asked for Bibles since they saw what an influence God's Word had on the SCOC pastors. Church leaders often took the author to SPLA-commanders during his visits to the Nuba Mountains. In 2006 I had the opportunity to visit one of the commanders who in the mean time was elected as governor of Southern Kordofan. Although he is a Muslim and opposed SCOC for many years he showed clear signs of using his position to help the Church. It took him many years to change his view of SCOC and its leaders' uncompromising stance for their faith. In the end he was won over by their integrity.

6.8.8 Theological training in the Nuba Mountains

All the information from 6.8.8 to 6.8.11 is the result of an interview with Pastor Musa al Murad of SCOC on 4 October 2006. The author also shared some personal experiences gained between 1997 and 2006 in the Nuba Mountains.

In 1991 a SCOC leader from the Moro tribe, Pastor Butros Snaba, took the initiative of opening a Bible School in the Nuba Mountains. Snaba was trained at Gideon Theological College in Melut and on his return to his home area realized that something had to be done to address the enormous shortage of trained leaders. There were only six SCOC pastors in all the SPLA controlled areas in the Nuba Mountains. They were Nabil Kodi and Isaac Ganian in Kwalib, Brema Komi in Kobang, Gibrail Abdallah from Otoro, and Musa al Murad in the Moro area. Butros Snaba also ministered in the Moro district.

The pastors realized that the war-induced barrier between them and SCOC in government-controlled areas could continue indefinitely. They decided to address the pressing need for trained church leaders. If they trained new leaders they could help them in ministry and even take their places in the top leadership should they die.

SCOC initiated a theological training program in the town of Umm Dulu in January 1991. While using the SCOC church building as a training facility they spoke about it as Cush Theological College (CTC). Butros Snaba was the principal and Nabil, Isaac and Gibrail became the first tutors. CTC used the curriculum of GTC in Melut. There were 14 students from several different Nuba tribes. All of them belonged to SCOC.

In the first year students came together in Umm Dulu for only one month. After that the course was structured in such a way that students came together for two months of training in a year. It took the first group eight years to go through the curriculum.

From the beginning local congregations supported the training by bringing firewood, fruit and even chickens for the staff and students. The author had the privilege to witness such an occasion in 1999. It was a joyous affair with singing, dancing and special messages of encouragement from women and youth leaders to the theological students. A woman leader presented a chicken to the student leader and explained how a hen protects her chicks. She then exhorted the future leaders to play a similar role towards their church members.

In 1992 CTC accepted students from ECS and the Evangelical Church as well. Since then CTC has been open to all three denominations. Pastor Musa al Murad joined the training staff in 1992. In that year the first two groups of students were joined into one class. A new intake of students doubled the teaching responsibilities of the staff.

Training in Umm Dulu came to an abrupt halt when government forces captured the town in March 1997. The fact that CTC lost its training facilities in Umm Dulu did not stop the training program. Staff and students moved to a village on a mountain called Ngongoro. At Ngongoro a shortage of water and insecurity forced CTC to relocate to a village called Kauda. The move took place in October of the same year. When the training moved to Kauda more students joined the program and student numbers increased to seventy. The training was conducted in the old mission compound of SUM. It was during this time that the author first visited the Nuba Mountains. I taught and visited churches for seven weeks and gained first hand experience of the destabilizing effect of Antanov planes that dropped bombs close to the place of training.

In April 1998 the first group of students graduated in Kauda. By that time Government forces targeted Kauda and CTC moved back to Ngongoro. The same water shortage experienced in 1997 forced the staff and students to move to a place called Serf al Jemoes. The third move took place at the beginning of 1999. Government forces suddenly attacked the area twice and CTC was moved deeper into the mountains to a place called Ikabang at the end of 1999. The resilience of the teachers and students is a testimony to the fact that training does not depend on permanent structures. CTC was a mobile Bible School in the truest sense of the word!

The second group of CTC students graduated in Ikabang in 2000. In 1999 CTC also started to train pastors in the TTI-program of Open Doors. The two training programs ran parallel. After finishing the GTC curriculum several students continued to attend the TTI-training. The first TTI-students graduated in 2002 and another class was started. At this point the GTC and TTI-curricula merged to form one training program. In 2004 CTC again moved from Ikabang to Tangal after the semi-permanent buildings burnt down in a bush fire.

No classes were conducted in 2005 because of leadership problems. Decisions were made by SCOC leaders in Khartoum concerning CTC without consulting the staff in Nuba Mountains. Training started again in 2006 and Immanuel Lafanti took the position of principal.

6.8.9 Ordination of new SCOC pastors in the Nuba Mountains

In spite of severe difficulties and after studying for many years four new SCOC pastors were ordained in 2002. They were Murriss Kertina, Immanuel Lafanti, Michael Kornelius and Wilson Adam. All these men came from the Moro area. In April 2006 Bashir Martin from the Moro area and Ishaia Philipus from Tabanja were also ordained. Plans are underway to ordain at least three Kwalib pastors namely Alamin Komi, Elia Philipus and Jimes Maraba.

6.8.10 Contact between SCOC in Khartoum and in the Nuba Mountains

In 2002 it became possible for SCOC pastors from Khartoum to visit the Nuba Mountains. Eventually two Khartoum pastors began to minister in Jigeba (Nabil al Farik and Sadik Male) and one in Al Nugra (Barnaba Matthias). A fourth one joined a congregation in the Tangal area (Istifanus Angalo).

Years before financial issues had brought division in the SCOC leadership in Khartoum. The problem became so big that two different leadership groups were formed. Both groups sent delegates to the Nuba Mountains trying to convince the leadership to join them. The pastors in Nuba Mountains refused and said they could not side with either one of the two groups. They would only cooperate when the problem was solved. Between 2004 and 2005 the Khartoum leaders came to Kujur close to Kauda and the problem was solved. The two groups reconciled.

In 2005 a new leadership was chosen. Mahajoub Kajo became the chairman and Matta Mubarak became the general secretary. An elder by the name of Ramadan became treasurer.

6.8.11 Current state of SCOC in the Nuba Mountains

A cease-fire was signed in 2001 between the SPLA in the Nuba Mountains and the government. The CPA followed it in January 2005. Trade between the Nuba Mountains and Khartoum flourished from that time onward. Whole communities moved down from the hills where they had stayed for many years. Cultivation became much easier and life in general improved dramatically.

Unfortunately there is also a negative side to the newfound peace and prosperity. Church attendance dropped and church members became less devoted than in the war years. One of the main reasons was that people wanted to “catch up” for the many years they could not improve their physical situation. Since several markets are open on Sundays people would ply their trade while others would go for extended visits to Khartoum. The church leadership is trying to address the problem by arranging training seminars for elders and church members.

6.9 Sudan Pentecostal Churches (SPC)

6.9.1 Founding of an indigenous Sudanese church

The Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC) can be seen as an extension and development of the youth movement that originated in Juba. A number of young Sudanese men accepted the Christian faith around 1970 and one of them, Paul Nhomlau, went to study at the Nairobi Pentecostal Bible College. He encouraged his friends to join him. Three of them namely Nathaniel Garang, Benjamin Terah and Adi Ambrose later became influential church leaders (Werner et al 2000:483).

Nhomlau, Garang and Terah came from an ECS background and their only desire was to bring new evangelistic zeal and spiritual depth to their denomination. After their studies Benjamin Terah and Adi Ambrose went to Juba while the others moved to Bor. Terah succeeded in gathering many young people around him through his vigorous, uncompromising preaching. Realizing that he was not a pastor but rather an evangelist and sensing the discomfort of his converts in the ECS milieu Terah formed them into a distinct group in 1980. He asked Rev John Moi of AIC to take pastoral care of them.

In 1982 Terah requested Adi Ambrose to become pastor of his group of converts. Ambrose accepted and the Juba Christian Centre was formed with a strong Pentecostal identity. At this same time a Ugandan preacher, Simon Sekwat, started a Pentecostal church at Kajo-Keji while Thomas Kenyi did the same in Yei (Werner et al 2000:484).

In Bor Nathaniel Garang remained in ECS and eventually became bishop of Bor Diocese. Paul Nhomlau only arrived in 1977 and started to work as a teacher in Malek Secondary School. While being a teacher, Nhomlau also preached. His style was aggressive and it made him unpopular in some circles. However, several young people were convicted and stayed close to their preacher and mentor. One of these young men was Isaiah Dau who later became a prominent leader of SPC.

In December 1981 Nhomlau was expelled from ECS and together with his followers he started a Pentecostal Church in Bor area. Links were established with the Pentecostal Church in Juba, but from the beginning the strong personalities of the different leaders caused tension. In Bor itself Nhomlau preferred the word 'Apostolic' above 'Pentecostal'. This led to a split with the one group linking up with SPC and the other calling itself the Apostolic Church (Werner et al 2000:484-486).

At present SPC have congregations in Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Bahr al Ghazal. They are also active in Khartoum. SPC has a good partnership relationship with International Aid Service (IAS). In Akuem in Northern Bahr al Ghazal they have opened an interdenominational Bible School.

In spite of the fact that SPC is not a large denomination in Sudan its members are very mission minded. When the garrison town of Wau opened up after the signing of the CPA, SPC evangelists immediately went there on an evangelism trip. In spite of opposition they succeeded in planting a small church within a few weeks.

At present SPC has 65 congregations and approximately 5 200 members. They also have 18 200 affiliates. (<http://www.gmi.org> 13 October 2006). Reverend Michael Taban is the General Overseer.

6.9.2 Serving God in trying times

In more recent years the author had contact with a number of remarkable pastors from SPC. Reverend Oliver Soma is currently vice-principal at Emmanuel Christian Theological Centre 20 miles outside of Yei. He is also the founder of Koboko Bible Training Centre (KBTC) in Koboko. KBTC is a theological training institute for Sudanese and Ugandan pastors. Despite many obstacles that would have stopped a lesser man, Reverend Soma has continued to build God's kingdom wherever he goes. His prayer life and desire for unity between denominations is an inspiration to many.

Another pastor with whom the author has contact is William Deng Koch. Pastor William ministers in Northern Bahr al Ghazal. He has been jailed thrice on accusations connected to his Pentecostal convictions. According to the Sphere System of colonial days Northern

Bahr al Ghazal was given to another denomination. The leaders of this denomination did not appreciate the arrival of other denominations in “their area”. It happened especially because the newcomers placed a lot of emphasis on salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone and a complete rejection of traditional gods.

Pastor Deng was asked to leave the area within 24 hours. He asked what he had done to deserve such a harsh command. No reason was given and he duly refused to leave. The enraged commander in charge of the area ordered his arrest. During his first imprisonment Pastor Deng received very little food and many threats. His commitment to Christ remained intact and he was released after about thirty days.

The presence of a Pentecostal Church angered certain leaders and a reason was fabricated to get Pastor Deng back in prison. During his second prison service he received twenty lashes in the morning and twenty lashes in the evening for five consecutive days. Pastor Deng succeeded in getting a message to a more sympathetic commander and he was released.

During his third imprisonment he received twenty lashes every day for 18 days. During the evening of the eighteenth day some remarkable event took place. I wrote his testimony down in a trip report (Trip report: April 2004):

At about midnight on the eighteenth day something very special happened. William had to sleep on the floor in the prison and he was treated as somebody with no rights. At that time the wife of one of the soldiers became critically ill. As it happens so often when people have no more human options left, they turn to God. Relatives and friends started to ask if anybody knew where they could find a pastor. It was then that somebody remembered William. He was brought from the prison to the house where the lady was very close to death.

After hearing that the people wanted him to pray for the woman, he started by asking that those who believed that God could heal her, would stay behind. By that time the soldier’s wife was already in a

coma. One by one the people left the room. They wanted the woman to live, but they simply could not bring themselves to the point of believing that William's prayers would accomplish that. After some time only William, the woman and her husband were left in the room.

The husband was willing to trust God for the healing of his wife, so William started to pray. He prayed for some time and then called the woman by her name. After calling her name several times there was a very faint reply. William prayed with new hope and then again called her name. This time the lady replied in a much clearer, stronger voice. William and Florence's husband held her upright while William continued to pray for her. After some time she regained consciousness. God had done a modern time miracle!

The news of what had happened spread like wildfire and people came streaming back into the room to see the woman. They were astounded and William was treated with great respect. All of this happened on a Friday evening. Instead of being thrown back on the ground in the prison William was given a bed. He was also asked to preach to all the soldiers on the following Sunday. He did this and many people came to listen to his message. William used the opportunity to preach an evangelistic sermon and several people accepted Christ that day. A new congregation was born.

At present SPC members are among the most mission minded Christians in Sudan. Although they do not have a lot of financial resources they are always among the first to volunteer in going to places where the gospel has not yet been heard. They have started initiatives in reaching out to Muslims in two previous garrison towns in Northern Bahr al Ghazal.

6.10 Smaller and newer denominations in Southern Sudan

6.10.1 The Evangelical Revivalist Church Moru

Sudan does not know the abundance of African Independent Churches that is so prevalent in other parts of the continent. However, in 1974 disenchanted ECS leaders founded the Evangelical Revivalist Church Moru (ERCM). They were in disagreement with the ECS stance on the use of traditional musical instruments in the church. The disagreement eventually led to a split and the formation of a new denomination.

Joane Ada and his wife Suzanna were nearly illiterate Christians who lived close to Mundri. Both of them had dreams in 1969 that they had to use a traditional musical shaker in worshipping God. ECS leaders refused dancing in the church although they made the concession that rattles and trumpets could be used in orderly fashion (Werner et al 2000:477-478).

When a prominent supporter of the revival group decided he could not split from ECS over the matter other leaders reacted by establishing the ERCM. The new denomination adopted the ECS leadership hierarchy, but gives a lot of prominence to women. Female leaders often hold the position of prophets with the main task of interpreting dreams. Dreams play an important role in church life giving guidance for actions to be taken. Members also wear long white robes and carry banners very similar to Independent Churches in other parts of Africa.

Wheeler makes the following observation on the reason for the emergence of the ERCM: "It seems primarily to be about a deeper enculturation of the gospel – a greater freedom to express in music, liturgy and dance, in dress and behaviour the people's response to the Christian message" (Werner et al 2000:477).

6.10.2 Baptist Church of Sudan

The following history is the result of information given by Pastor Ding Galuak that was edited by the Baptist missionary, Mark Kisse on 23 August 2006.

In 1995 Sudanese refugees went to Dadab in Northeastern Kenya to a camp called Ifo. As was the case in Ethiopian refugee camps believers from different denominations fellowshiped together. However, the fact that many of the denominations were formed around tribal lines bothered a group of believers. They started discussions on how all Southern Sudanese believers could worship together in a fully inter-tribal milieu. The original idea of establishing a Baptist Church came from two Equatorial brothers called Peter and David. They understood the Sudanese context well enough to know the initiative must come from Nuer believers. Nuer believers were seen as being the most neutral group in the camp.

Thomas Tut Nhial was a Nuer from Nasir who also stayed in Ifo. He had a vision to open a church so Peter and David approached him. They suggested to him to open a Baptist Church instead of a Church of Christ. Tut Nhial shared the idea with other believers and all agreed. They believed that if God was behind their insights He would open a door for it to become a reality. In 1996 UNHCR visited Ifo and asked volunteers to go to Kakuma Refugee Camp. All those in favour of starting the Baptist Church volunteered. Ifo was only a temporary camp and the majority of Sudanese refugees were in Kakuma. Kakuma was divided in communities in order to keep different tribes or people from the same areas together.

After arriving in Kakuma, Tut Nhial started an English adult literacy class. He also started a Baptist church on 10 May 1996 with his English class students as his first congregation members. There were at least four committed leaders with the founder who acted as elders. They were John Monycuol Deng from Abwong in Dinka Ngok area, David Matur from Rumbek, David from Western Equatoria and Ding Gatluak from Nuer in Nasir. At the first service there were Dinka and Equatorial believers.

After some time Christians from the Dinka Ngok tribe said they wanted their own church in their community. The Equatorians remained with the Nuer Baptists in Kakuma's Zone 5. In 1997 the Dinka Baptists from Bahr al Ghazal opened another church in Zone 6. David Matur led them.

In 1999 Tut Nhial moved from Kakuma to work with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Pagak in Upper Nile. He is still a believer, but not a pastor in the Baptist Church of Sudan.

As the Baptist Church of Sudan grew its leaders realized they needed to connect with the wider Baptist family. Members and leaders contributed money and sent a delegation to Nairobi. The delegates visited the Baptist Convention of Kenya. Tut Nhial and David from Western Equatoria met with the Kenyan moderator, Reverend Samson Kisia. The moderator was very encouraging and thanked the Sudanese Baptists for starting a church all by themselves. He told his visitors that Baptists were trying to open a church in Sudan since 1981 but without success. After discussions Reverend Kisia wrote a letter to confirm that the Baptist Convention of Kenya recognized the Baptist Church of Sudan as part of the Baptist family.

Reverend Kisia also contacted a missionary, Troy Haas in Lodwar and asked him to meet with Sudanese Church leaders. Haas was requested to incorporate the Sudanese Baptists in his program. He accepted and fellowship with the Sudanese began in July 1996. In 1997 Haas attended the Baptist Convention in Nairobi. He took Tut Nhial and Sam Anuar with and requested for missionaries to be sent to Sudan. The Baptist Mission appointed John Witte from America to work with Haas.

Haas started a Bible school in Kakuma for Turkana and Sudanese in 1997. Unfortunately he was stopped from ministering in Turkana at the end of 1999 or beginning of 2000. His suspension affected the growth of Baptist work in Sudan and the funding of the students as well. The Bible school he had started was closed down.

Haas, however, did not forget his Sudanese friends. He went to America in 1998 and got scholarships for five church leaders to study at Kenya Baptist Theological College in Limuru. The five candidates were Matthew Dhol Michael from Leer, John Machol Deng from Abwong, Elijah Riak Chol from Abwong, Ding Gatluak Lual from Nasir and David Matur from Bahr al Ghazal. The five pastors started their studies in September 1999. David Matur could not continue his studies in 2000 because scholarship funds ran out.

The wider Baptist family had in the mean time started a work inside Southern Sudan. John Witte went to Bahr al Ghazal in 2000 and, with a Kenyan missionary and two Americans, started work in Kulu. They used the chronological Bible storying method to teach the church leaders there. An oral Bible school was opened with a two-year curriculum and a diploma from America. Mark Kisse, who took over the medical clinic that Samaritans Purse was operating in Akot, joined Witte. Mark worked alongside Wycliffe Mulinya, who was the director of the clinic. They planted the first Baptist Church inside Sudan in 2002. From that time they have planted many more around the south.

After graduating the four Sudanese pastors decided to go back to the Baptist Mission requesting them to send the four of them to Sudan. They wanted to plant Baptist churches in their own country. The four met with Mark Kisse, who agreed to send the four to their respective areas following a two-month training period in Akot. Kisse wanted them to work alongside the leaders that he had been training there.

From January to March 2004 Mark Kisse took the four church leaders to Akot. Kisse had already planted 10 churches in Akot County. The four leaders helped plant another five in three months' time. After this, the four leaders were sent to their respective areas. Mark Kisse promised to support them for one year only. Ding Gatluak planted one church, Goynuar Baptist Church in Kechkuon. John Monycuol and Elijah Riak planted four churches in the Abwong area. Matthew Dhol planted two or three churches in Leer area. The church in Kechkwan has already planted another one. There is also some new work in the Nasir area.

At present Mark Kisse is the strategy facilitator for all the work in southern Sudan, living in and working from the Rumbek area as his base. During the past year and a half there were two young men from America who were doing research and planting new churches in different areas. New work began in the Pakam region where James, Ryan and Abraham, the latter an evangelist from Akot, planted a church. The newly planted church has already produced another church about eight miles north. There is now a church in America who has "adopted" the Pakam work. They will be sending teams out to train new leaders and plant more churches.

In their research Kisseee and his team have discovered that there is some Baptist work going on in Awiel, Nabus, Boma, Yei, and other areas of Southern Sudan. Some of the young leaders that have been trained in Akot have moved into new areas and have started new churches on their own. The Baptists in Sudan are currently trying to partner with other like-minded missions to help start a church planting movement in Southern Sudan. Mark Kisseee writes: "There is a lot of work to be done and we certainly cannot do it alone" (extract from e-mail: 23 August 2006).

6.10.3 Trinity Presbyterian Church

Tribalism, whether real or imagined, often plagued the Church in Sudan. A group of Dinka church leaders who had previously belonged to PCOS founded the Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC). They felt that PCOS with the majority of its members being Nuer discriminated against Dinka members. Andrew Wiew Riak is the founder of TPC. Most TPC congregations are in North Sudan but its membership consists mostly of Southerners. According to an internet report "Some hold out the hope that an eventual union of PCOS, SPEC, and SCOS will pave the way for bringing TPC back into the fold" (www.reformiert-online.net 4 July 2006)

6.10.4 A list of other denominations

Other denominations working in Southern Sudan include the United Reformed Church, Evangelical Free Church of Sudan, Seventh Day Adventists and Sudanese Church of Christ (different from SCOC that emerged from the work of SUM).

After leadership struggles in ECS two new Anglican denominations were formed namely the Reformed Episcopal Church of Sudan and the Anglican Church of Sudan. At present the ECS leadership does not recognize the two rival denominations although the Archbishop of Kenya allowed the ordination of one bishop of the Anglican Church in Sudan in his archbishopric. Another denomination, Good Shepherd Church, came into being after the founder broke away from ECS in Bahr al Ghazal.

CHAPTER 7

PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

7.1 Looking back and ahead

“There is need to be realistic, to rediscover our vocation and humbly submit ourselves and our inadequate talents to Him who manifest his powers in human weakness. It is time to shift gears as we move to a new era of Christianity in Africa” (Chipenda 1997:22). Sudan is currently experiencing a time of radical changes. The leaders of the Church have to face the multitude of daunting challenges with humility, but also with the sure knowledge that they serve the God of the impossible.

Through the survey of Sudan’s church history many positive and inspiring events were brought back to memory. Amazing church growth took place in unlikely times and places. God also at times used the most unlikely people to further his kingdom in Sudan.

Sudanese Christians and missionaries alike served God and his people at great personal cost. Many died in the course of duty. During the crisis years of the civil war Sudanese Christians showed great resilience and strength. When whole communities were uprooted believers took their faith with them to refugee camps and deep in the bush. Harmony and unity characterized Christian communities in the refugee camps of Ethiopia as members and leaders from different denominations stood together for the cause of Christ.

However, there is also a shadow side to reflect upon. Many mistakes had been made by well intending missionaries. Power struggles and corruption weakened the Church in recent years. Opportunities to serve the physically and spiritually needy had been wasted due to internal strife and divisions.

At present Sudan is in a crucial period of its history. In 2011 referendum results will determine whether the country will keep its present borders or if it will be divided into two separate countries. For the Church it is a time of great opportunities and challenges. Many leaders know the role they have to play and are willing to accept the challenges.

A group of key church leaders met after the signing of the CPA and formulated their resolve to address the problem of disunity and suffering. “As their spiritual shepherds, we have known the suffering experienced by our people on the ground. We know the disunity and alienation which war has created ... We see the present time as a unique opportunity to mobilise the Sudanese people to overcome disunity and alienation and work together to build a real peace on the ground worthy of the title of a new Sudan

(<http://sudan.anglican.org> 7 July 2006).

Church leaders, ordinary Sudanese believers and expatriate Christians who support the Church in Sudan in various capacities must strive to make the most of this vital window period. If they fail to act on the possibilities open to them at the present those very opportunities may be lost forever.

7.2 Leadership issues

“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you , but being examples to the flock” (1 Pt 5:2-3).

7.2.1 The Church’s strategic role as peace makers and peace keepers

It is generally accepted in Sudan that the Church is a significant role player in the interim period before the 2011 referendum. Church leaders must lead their members in having a relevant and strong voice. They must guide church members in spiritual matters and work for bringing new growth and spiritual depth in the hundreds of rural congregations. At the same time they have to give special attention to urban congregations that were for a long time disconnected from the rural Church in Southern Sudan. In many areas urban congregations functioned under strict Muslim authorities for a long time. They need to receive new boldness from the churches that flourished in areas under SPLA control.

Since Sudan is going through a strategic political time, church leaders must inform their members on the practical implications of the CPA. They must also address the very real need for trauma counselling. The claim that every single family in Southern Sudan was directly affected by the civil war is probably true. Together with trauma counselling serious attention must be given to peace and reconciliation efforts. In an open letter leading church

leaders made it clear that they are committed to peace that is built on faith (<http://sudan.anglican.org> 7 July 2006)

The suffering of the past challenges us to examine the root causes of conflict. The dawn of peace offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address important issues within wider Sudanese society. We need to look at the roots of the war in bitterness and injustice and learn from these so as to avoid repeating them and risking a return to conflict. We reject a resort to violence and call on all people to promote peaceful co-existence and to resolve problems through peaceful means using traditional and other mechanisms. Our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us confidence that we are not condemned to repeat the past – the way to a new future is presented before us. To enter this new future we need to learn from the lessons of the past and define together the kind of future we want for our nation

It is indeed only faith in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, which can bring true peace to a population that is characterized by distrust, hate and violence nurtured over generations. Lip service to Him will not be enough. It is only when church leaders actively preach and live the peace brought by Jesus that their followers will listen. Unfortunately many leaders live so far away from the people that they cannot set a daily example to them on how to live lives of peacemakers.

7.2.2 Leaders leading from a distance

One of the biggest challenges for the top church leadership is to reunite with their members inside Sudan. Most top-level church leaders had left the country during the war and settled in Kenya and Uganda. Now that peace has come they find it challenging to coordinate family needs and church responsibilities. The infrastructure in Southern Sudan is still suffering from the effects of the longest civil in Africa's recent history. There are no schools with the same quality teaching as in the neighbouring countries where the children of many top church leaders are being educated. Such leaders find it difficult to bring their families back to Southern Sudan at the present time.

Bishop Daniel Bul of ECS writes about the urgency of preparing Southern Sudan's infrastructure to make it possible for Sudanese living outside the country to return: "We have called upon the Governments and the international community to expedite their return ... As churches we are ready to work with international organizations to open the way. Urgent needs include shelter, water, and schools for those arriving back in their home areas. This process needs to begin straight away if the referendum on Southern Sudan provided by the CPA is to have any meaning." (<http://www.anglicancommunion.org> 15 Sept 2006).

It will be unfair to judge leaders with family responsibilities too harshly and their dilemma just highlights the need for rapid infrastructural development.

Other leaders left Sudan for further studies. Some of them still have some years of studying ahead of them before they can return. Although there is an intense felt need for further theological training the way pastors ministering in the same region left their congregations all at once in the last decade left gaps at home. It led to many serious problems.

A few years ago the author attended a church meeting in an isolated rural area. One of the evangelists who had to lead the local church in the absence of its leaders used a graphical example to explain how the absence affected them. He compared the church with a cattle camp. Traditionally the calves would be penned down in the centre of the herd at nighttime. The boys in charge of the cattle would then tie down the cows and lastly put the bulls on the outside fringes of the herd. They were strategically placed to protect the weaker animals from attacks by wild animals like hyenas. When the bulls are removed and the hyenas discover it they will target that herd. They will continue to kill and maim the cows and calves. The evangelist then told a number of pastors, who were studying in Kenya and who were only on a visit to the area, that they were the bulls. He then warned them that they might find their herds (congregations) depleted by the time they return. Sadly his words proved to be prophetic in some areas.

A third group of church leaders simply find it difficult to leave the easy life in Kenya and Uganda they have become used to (see Werner et al 2000:508). They treasure the communication with the outside world and involve themselves mostly with development

projects. Eshetu Abate warns: “It is very easy to take advantage of being the messenger of the gospel using the office for personal or secret gain” (1995:77).

In conclusion, long distance leaders are rarely effective in the long run. The challenge for Sudanese church leaders whatever the reasons for their absence may be is to reunite with their people and lead them by example.

7.2.3 Power struggles within church leaderships

A third challenge for church leaders is the whole issue of power struggles. Several denominations have experienced splits or threats of splits due to conflicts among the top leadership in recent years. In some cases second level church leaders within a specific denomination or a particular area were responsible for divisions. They felt constricted by what they experienced as excessive control by the leaders directly above them. Although certain top leaders are indeed guilty of exercising restricting control over their subordinates they are not the only ones in the wrong. There are instances where second level leaders exhibited a similar desire for power as what they condemned so strongly in their leadership!

Gregg Okesson writes: “There is a desperate need within the African Church today for servant leaders: not leaders who occasionally carry the mantle of servanthood so as to impress the followers with a sense of humility; but rather real servant leaders, whose identities arise from the very creation act and is developed by a growing awareness of conformity to the Image of the Son” (2004:41-42).

Sudan in particular is in need of servant leaders who can guide the Church through the difficult interim period. For this reason it is indeed tragic that several church leaders are so taken up in petty struggles that they lose vision of what they can and must do in this crucial period of time.

At the root of many power struggles is the accessibility or non-accessibility to donor funds. That is not the only reason, but exposure to divisions in specific areas convinced the author that it is indeed often the case. The frustration of second level leaders when they know that funds were donated for their area without them seeing any development causes many

accusations and negative rumours to develop. This in turn leads to group forming, polarization and a win-lose attitude in many hearts.

A second reason for friction in leadership circles is that some denominations allow their top leadership to remain in power until they decide to retire or die. Younger leaders with fresh ideas, zeal and a desire to develop their own potential are often frustrated by the perceived slowness and rigidity of those above them in leadership structures. The clash between a desire for retaining power on the side of bishops, general secretaries and other top leaders and an urge on the side of upcoming leaders to “climb the ladder” of ambition and progress can be very destructive.

Leaders in both groups mentioned above must reflect on the words of Okesson. He said: “... we must likewise critique the erroneous conceptions of authority, especially those associated with external criteria; namely position, titles, degrees and status ... The insecure leader, who does not understand his identity as arising from the image of God, will inevitably rely upon such external validations, yet with minimal long-term influence” (2004:42).

Seminars on leadership, retreats, synods and general assemblies abound in Southern Sudan. The facilitators of such gatherings must strive to address the challenge of power in leadership. Apart from the negative aspect of fighting to retain power they must emphasise that “... true spiritual influence arises from within: from one’s character, from relationship, and from identity” (Okesson 2004:42).

There is a Sudanese proverb that says it is the grass that suffers when two bulls fight. It is very true in the case of power struggles within the Church. Local church members often do not understand the actual reasons for the divisions among their leaders. They are confused by the propaganda and aggression of their spiritual leaders against other people they also saw as their spiritual guides. There are tragic examples of immature believers who return to their traditional African religions. The reason they give is often that they can not reconcile the strife and divisions among the church leaders in their area with the message of peace and love the very same men proclaimed.

7.2.4 Tribalism and favoritism

Church leaders in Southern Sudan are sometimes accused of showing favouritism to members of their family, clan or tribe. Nasimiyu-Wasike warns: “The African Church has to be vigilant so that it does not succumb to the corruption of elitism, bribery, nepotism, ethnocentrism, and regionalism” (2005:110-111). Sudanese church leaders must take up the challenge of giving equal chances for development in different skills to all the people under their leadership.

Church leaders are normally the people who nominate church leaders or members under their care for further studies, positions in the church administration or other lucrative opportunities. They have to be careful in their election. Too often there are clear indications that they have given unequal opportunities to those related to them.

After the signing of the CPA key church leaders gathered and committed themselves to the promoting of unity (<http://sudan.anglican.org> 7 July 2006).

We value the positive aspects of our Sudanese tribal identities but reject the forms of tribalism which bring division and conflict among our people. As followers of Jesus Christ we have a mandate to overcome divisions between tribes and ethnicities. We recognise our responsibilities as Church leaders to transcend such divisions and the Church’s important place in encouraging wider Sudanese society to value and respect ethnicities different from their own

The challenge in overcoming feelings towards other tribes that were developed over many years is great. However, if the leaders give power to their words by their example generations-old prejudices may be overcome.

7.2.5 Financial constraints on church leaders

Financial problems are very real to many Sudanese pastors. Only a small percentage of Sudanese church leaders receive financial assistance on a regular basis. In most cases assistance comes from non-Sudanese sources such as friends or churches in the West or

Korea. Church leaders have to face the challenge of working towards a self-sustaining Sudanese Church. Two areas that must be addressed are the role of culture and the relationship with Christians from developed countries.

It is common to find African theologians pointing accusing fingers to the West when discussing Africa's economic problems. While their arguments are valid it is also important to read the following words of Ndung'u: "Among some African communities, there are beliefs and practices that are counter-productive in modern times" (2003:64).

In traditional Sudanese culture a young man is for instance expected to pay dowry before he can get married. Many of them grew up in refugee camps where they had no possibility of keeping cattle or grow crops. When such young men reach the age of marriage they would often not have the needed cattle or money to pay for the dowry.

The above-mentioned problem causes much anxiety in the lives of young pastors. Some of them have made promises to their in-laws about future payments. However, when they struggle to keep their promises their fathers-in-law often demand their daughters and grandchildren back. They will even threaten the hapless man that they will use force or will curse him if he does not comply quickly. This is a serious problem that affects both the family life and ministry of several young Christian leaders.

Church leaders must exercise their influence in the wider community to address cultural practices that promote dishonesty and immorality. They should take the matter of excessive dowry to the appropriate authorities with the aim of helping young people who grew up in refugee camps.

Many of the financial problems of Sudanese can be directly linked to the drawn out civil war. Ndung'u writes: "Lands that should be used productively are turned into battlefields while the inhabitants become beggars in adjacent countries" (2003:63-64). It is important for church leaders to get involved in establishing long-term peace so that potentially wealthy areas can provide much needed income. Peace and resulting prosperity together with proper teaching can eventually lead to greater self-sustenance.

At the same time church members must learn the principle of caring for their pastors' physical well-being while the pastors take care of their spiritual needs. Many congregations have not grasped the concept of caring for their pastors. An Anglican pastor explained to the author that missionaries in his home area provided Sudanese Christians with a wrong model. They brought in needed funds and relief items from outside. That, in fact, is still the case today. Missionaries wanted to draw Sudanese to Christianity by using incentives. Children were even paid to attend school at a time! According to the Sudanese pastor such methods ingrained in the minds of Sudanese Christians the idea that the pastor is the one who has to take care of his flock's spiritual and physical needs.

To complicate matters church leaders are often the link between local communities and the outside world. Church members would see their pastors arriving by aeroplane with visitors who would often bring relief items with them. Kasambala laments that well-intentioned donors can spoil African societies "... the churches in the developed world have capitalized on this dependency syndrome. Instead of helping the churches in the developing world to redefine themselves with self-supporting and self-sustaining projects and programmes, they have continued to patronize them with handouts." (2005:272-3).

Many donors act out of ignorance and do not deliberately capitalize on the dependency syndrome. Church leaders must therefore strive to make donors aware of appropriate giving. Kasambala emphasises that funding must be done in the context of empowering. He writes: "In mission, empowering is understood as an active process by which partners give each other time to understand and accommodate the perspectives and world views of the other. Empowering becomes a process of enabling the other to reach towards their God-given potential, and allowing them to apply the same in their localized situations" (2005:271).

Once Christian donors from the developed world understand the potential and dangers of their giving, true partnerships can lead to long-term positive results.

7.2.6 The relationship between trained and untrained church leaders

As was seen in the history of the Church in Sudan spontaneous people movements emerged during the war years. The leaders of the movements were mostly uneducated

young men and women. While they were responsible for leading and planting many rural churches it was inevitable that the time would come for the official church leadership to get involved. Tension in who would have control over the congregations was unavoidable.

In recent years many young pastors left Sudan in search of further studies. Their exposure to the wider Christian world and a broadening of their theological understanding will doubtlessly enrich the Sudanese Church. It will not happen without friction. As the “educated” pastors will gain senior positions in the church leaderships they will automatically take authority over their “uneducated” counterparts. Church leaders will have to handle the situation with sensitivity and wisdom.

7.2.7 Correcting a history of corruption

Ndung’u writes: “The greed for material wealth has been instrumental to the development of a high rate of corruption in Africa” (2003:61). The Church in Sudan has sadly not escaped the sin of greed. Many denominations have a dark chapter of corruption in their more recent history. In some cases donors have stopped all projects. They insisted on the removal of leaders suspected of mismanaging funds before they would consider future financial involvement.

In the present climate of Southern Sudan where huge amounts of money is pledged while church leaders have very real financial needs the temptation of mismanaging donations cannot be underestimated. Church leaders will have to build transparency measures into their projects. They must make the receivers of donor funds accountable to both donors and the local churches.

7.3 Maintaining and developing a Sudanese Church with its own identity

7.3.1 Christianity clad in different robes

It is a fact that culture plays an important role in the way people perceives Christianity. Although the foundational truths of God, his Word and his ways are absolute, the way it is experienced and expressed varies from culture to culture. Jose Chipenda writes: “As we

move from one culture to another we discover amazing similarities and striking differences” (1997:15).

In Sudan we find many different tribes with different cultures. Nilotic and several Equatorian tribes for instance have a lot in common. At the same time they also have different perspectives on certain life issues. While the Nilotic tribes are mostly pastoralists many Equatorian tribes are subsistence farmers. Tribes in the north of the country have been influenced by the Arabic world while the Kachepo tribe in Eastern Equatoria developed their worldview in an isolated corner of Sudan.

If the above is true within the borders of Sudan how much more this is the case when people from different continents visit or work in Sudan. The leaders of the Church must therefore take the role of culture on Christianity seriously. While being open to partnerships with Christians from the developed world they must not neglect to develop a truly Sudanese Christianity.

7.3.2 Developing a Sudanese Christianity that will satisfy real needs

Crisis often brings changes in culture. In certain instances it will make previously resistant people open to the message of the gospel. There are several examples in the history of Sudan. Reflecting on the people movements in Upper Nile where Christianity was accepted in areas where it had been resisted in the past, Andrew Wheeler writes: “With the widespread collapse of traditional sacrificial and ritual systems there is a need for an *emotionally satisfying Christian alternative that addresses the wide spectrum of concerns and threats that confront the Nuer community today*” (Werner et al 2000:542-543 emphasis mine).

All leaders of the Church in Sudan must take his observation seriously. They must continually search for and develop a satisfying Sudanese Christianity with its own identity. The gospel must be presented in such a way that it addresses the spiritual, emotional and social needs of Sudanese Christians who live and worship in their particular contexts. Different contexts demand different expressions of faith and church leaders must develop their ministries with this fact in mind.

During a curriculum evaluation workshop close to Yei a group of church leaders highlighted a number of positive and negative cultural aspects in Southern Sudan (ECTC Curriculum Evaluation Workshop: August 2005). Strong family ties and a strong sense of community topped the list of positive cultural traits. Sudanese culture emphasises hospitality, care for the needy and solidarity with the bereaved. On the negative side witchcraft, syncretism, dowry, polygamy, wife inheritance, the view of barrenness in a woman and the role of alcohol were mentioned.

Sudanese church leaders must develop and strengthen the positive aspects in their culture. They must point out the similarities it has with the commands and exhortations found in the Bible. At the same time they must stand against cultural views that clash with God's commandments.

Each continent has its own theological struggles and challenges. It is therefore important that Christian leaders on each continent must focus on relevant ways of making Christ known to their people. Mercy Oduyoye's described the relationship between the Church in Africa and the Western Church in the following way: "The relational structure between Churches in Africa and their Euro-American counterparts is not very different from the relationship between the so called debtor nations and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. While African Churches did not become financially indebted to Western Churches, ecclesially, theologically and liturgically they remain tied to their 'benefactors'" (1997:69).

Although early missionaries must carry part of the blame the time has come for church leaders to stop looking backwards. It is sad that so much theological discussion in Africa focuses on the negative past. African church leaders must rather disentangle their churches from what is foreign and develop positive Biblical theologies, liturgies and ecclesiologies.

In Sudan there is evidence of Western Christian ideas that were adopted uncritically. One example is the white robes ECS pastors all over rural Sudan wear on Sundays. While the robes have historical meaning within the Anglican tradition in the northern hemisphere it was adopted by ECS solely because CMS missionaries wore it in colonial days. The robes

are quite unsuitable to the Sudanese conditions, but over the years it has become an indispensable part of an ECS pastor's outfit. Sudanese Anglicans must perhaps reflect on how to design a more Sudanese type of Anglicanism in terms of liturgy and dress.

There is no need for rejecting everything foreign or exalting everything local. Real efforts must rather be taken to make the gospel as culture friendly as possible. Mugambi writes: "During the twenty first century, African Christianity ought to stabilize culturally, by manifesting a characteristically African outlook in rituals, symbols, vestment, music, liturgy, architecture, metaphors and theological emphases" (1997:55).

While emphasizing the need for culturally appropriate Christianity it goes without saying that culture must be adapted to fit the Bible and not vice versa.

7.3.3 When different worlds meet

Sudanese Christianity has indeed developed its own character in several parts of the country. Graphic examples can be taken from the second half of the twentieth century. The Christianization of the Uduk tribe for instance took place after missionaries unsuccessfully tried to introduce Western Christianity. Young Presbyterian Church leaders like Idris Nalos addressed real issues in the Murle community during the peaceful period following the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement (see Werner et al 2000:564-565).

In the last two decades grass root level leaders developed an indigenous approach to evangelism and church planting in the absence of ordained pastors. During the years of isolation they maintained and expanded the Church in a way that astonished everybody who heard of it.

Groves writes: "... the expansion of Christianity in any region must always be measured in two dimensions – the area of population that becomes attached to the new faith and the depth to which the new religion penetrates in reshaping faith and life" (1948:40). Whole communities were reshaped in Southern Sudan by the gospel. In fact the Church often was the only stabilizing factor in otherwise chaotic societies.

However, while a people movement emerged in Upper Nile and Bahr al Ghazal most of the

top leaderships of mainline Sudanese denominations lived in neighbouring countries. These leaders have received their theological training in training facilities moulded by Western ideas and methods. They have often adopted Western values and perspectives on church issues.

As contact between top leaders and the grass root level evangelists is re-established tension is unavoidable. In more than one sense the educated church leadership lives in a different world from many rural Sudanese Christians. There is an opportunity of enriching indigenous Christianity with valuable insights from other world parts. Unfortunately too many differences in goals, visions and views often inhibited such initiatives.

The situation in PCOS during the years when uneducated and educated leaders met is a classic example of how different people of the same tribe can think. While the educated leaders wanted to follow established Western methods in the managing of their denomination the leaders of the people movements were happy with their flexible ways. In any case “Establishing traditional church structures ... proved very hard. The traditional system compared unfavourably with the flexible, instinctive and sustainable patterns developed in the bush during the war” (Werner et al 2000:508). A short summary of how the two PCOS leadership groups met will be helpful in reflecting on the future.

Many of the grass root level leaders in Upper Nile had little if any secular and theological education and often only minimal Bible knowledge. They were used to ministering in a contextual way without traditionally Western structures (both in terms of buildings and administration). At first they were enthusiastic to have contact with their official leaders and through them with the outside world. However, they quickly felt overwhelmed and threatened by the more structured approach of trained pastors.

Formal training was very important in the eyes of the official PCOS leaders. The young men and women who had led the people movement felt they accomplished a lot without years of study in residential training institutes. They refused to be sidelined by educated leaders after they had devoted all their energy to ministry under very difficult circumstances. They were also not convinced that the trained leaders could improve on what they did simply by changing the structures of church administration and by sharing the gospel in a more Western way.

The leaders of the people movements would probably have agreed with the words of Karamaga: “The church’s centre of gravity is not its hierarchy. Its head is not its leaders; its head is Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Its vital strength does not come from the West whence come most of the financial resources. The church’s strength comes from the liberating spirit which blows where it pleases, carrying along individuals and communities in this dynamic of the kingdom of God” (1995:69-70).

From their side the top PCOS leaders realized there was a big need for giving the young churches more exposure to Bible knowledge. In many cases whole rural congregations had only a very basic understanding of Christianity. While they had a very indigenous character they needed a stronger biblical foundation. They would probably have agreed with Tienou who states: “... Numerical growth far outpaces spiritual depth and maturity in African Christianity” (as quoted by Cantrell 2005:82).

As far as the author knows no satisfactory solution has yet been found for the situation described above. It is not only PCOS in Upper Nile who has to address the problem. Many other denominations have similar issues they have to deal with. The challenge for official denominational leaders therefore remains. They have to enrich the Church in Sudan with ideas received from the wider Christian family while retaining a distinct Sudan “flavour” or identity in the way they guide their members. They must be careful not to scorn what the hundreds of barely literate evangelists had done in their absence under very difficult circumstances. Taking the need for a truly Sudanese Christian identity seriously they must search for ways of being evangelical and contextual at the same time.

7.3.4 Moving from a war situation to a country at peace

During the civil war years the people movements led to amazing church growth. In spite of having very little financial resources hundreds of new churches were planted and thousands of new believers joined the Church. The initiatives were completely indigenous. Instability, insecurity and destruction of normal societal structures became part of everyday life.

Since the signing of the CPA the situation has changed radically. Southern Sudan began a process of infrastructural development that will hopefully change the face of the country. Pledges by the international community exceeded four and a half billion American dollars. NGO's of many different kinds are involved in multiple projects ranging from farming and drilling of water wells to education and training programs. The money and activities of non-Sudanese with seemingly unrestricted funds create major expectations in the hearts of many Sudanese.

Promises made and financial incentives given by the government of Southern Sudan added to the expectations and changes. Part of developing the south of Sudan is to implement financial structures. Government officials are paid for their services, teachers are beginning to receive salaries and soldiers who have fought without getting any financial reward are now receiving money. In 2006 SPLA soldiers received salaries for the first time since the civil war erupted in 1983. Men who never before had the chance to buy what they wanted emptied markets of all its products. Alcohol consumption increased dramatically.

All the above-mentioned resources affect Christians and especially church leaders. Most pastors still do not receive salaries. Teachers who run church schools will not get anything from the government while teachers in government schools have already started to receive monthly salaries. It is difficult to serve without receiving any financial support while others with similar qualifications receive salaries for doing their work. Pastors face the very real temptation of leaving the ministry for a paid position. Some have indeed joined the army while others became teachers in government schools. Several have also applied for positions with international NGO's.

The challenge before the Church is how to motivate its unpaid leaders to continue their ministries. At the same time they have to think on how pastors, evangelists and other full-time Christian workers can get financial support. Teaching on giving (tithing) in local churches, income generating projects and two-way relationships with churches in wealthier parts of the world must be explored and implemented. Existing donors must be connected with the congregations in Sudan. Funds must not serve to satisfy the needs of the top leadership alone.

7.3.5 The effect of a large expatriate presence on the local church

The rapid diffusion of Christian adherence into parts of the world where churches barely existed 150 years ago has left a skewed distribution of resources. Today, unlike in almost any other earlier period, the money and the strong educational institutions of Christianity are in one part of the world, while most of the Christians are located in other parts of the world. The result is that a western Christian minority continues to exert great influence over the Christian majority of the non-West

(<http://pewforum.org/events> 26 July 2006)

In Sudan there is a large expatriate presence. It affects Southern Sudan on many levels. Huge sums of donated funds are available. NGO's with different visions and goals offer attractive jobs to qualified Sudanese. The unequal status of expatriates and grass roots Sudanese communities poses its own challenges. International companies and organizations as well as expatriate individuals have disproportionate power through their financial abilities. It is true of Christian and secular groups.

In order to execute their many development programs and for the sake of privacy NGO's have built their own compounds. These compounds are normally fenced off and open to just a few Sudanese while the majority of the local population will only view it from the outside. The arrangement makes good sense from a Western perspective. At the same time it creates an impression of inaccessibility in a society that values community participation.

Whereas most Sudanese have very little wealth in the Western sense of the word they daily see foreigners come and go in cars and aeroplanes. Most Sudanese welcome the resources of the expatriates, but they sometimes resent their arrogance, lack of cultural sensitivity and sense of superiority.

The challenge for the Church in Sudan and those who work alongside her is to be sensitive

to power balance. Church leaders must not be over-controlling when it comes to their relationship with wealthier expatriate partners. On the other hand they must not give in to the whims and wishes of strong-minded outsiders with little understanding of Sudan's history, culture and context. Church leaders must explore ways of helping visitors to channel their resources and energy in ways that will benefit the Church in the long-term.

Christian NGO's must be made aware of the fact that they can only be of real help when they empower the Sudanese Church. They must heed the words of Kasambala if they want to have a long-term impact on Sudan. "Empowering in Christian mission creates opportunities for partnership because it focuses on equipping the other to know how to deal with their own problems without creating a dependency syndrome, which is usual in ideological perspectives" (Kasambala 2005: 272).

The Church must also not rely on outside sources alone. Leaders must take the initiative to start their own development programs. Pastor Patrick Muturi explains an old cliché in a fresh way: "People must be taught not to be dependent on donated fish. Instead they should be taught not only how to fish but also how to grow their own fish in their own ponds" (quoted by Samita 2003:115).

7.3.6 The effect of relief programs on the Sudanese Church

The effect of relief programmes on the Church in Sudan cannot be over-emphasized. Relief items are distributed in ways that too often have only short-term benefits. Afterwards it creates anger and suspicion against those involved. Abundant material resources are often made available. It creates huge expectations among the Sudanese. When these expectations are not met it strains potentially good relationships. Money issues occasionally sour relationships either on the side of the expatriates who do not want to give any more assistance or on the side of the Sudanese whose expectations are not fulfilled. At times neither party is sure of the other side's motives for trying to create friendships. The situation is an uncomfortable reality today and needs to be reflected upon.

Indigenous Sudanese NGO's are increasingly being developed. Several indigenous NGO's have clear Christian goals. The local initiative is commendable, but there are some pitfalls and temptations that must be acknowledged. There is a real danger that pastors who

feel uncomfortable under their denominational leaders can receive freedom to do what they want to by starting their own organizations. Church leaders who establish their own non-governmental organizations must strive to work with the Church and not against her.

Money has the potential to build or break relationships and trust. As was said before, many denominations have their own development departments. In the past they have done praiseworthy work. On the other hand it was especially here that charges of financial mismanagement and corruption were heard most.

The Church has a definite mandate to be involved in relief work. At the same time church leaders involved in development work must reflect upon the words of Jose Chipenda (1997:21)

We fail to be in the forefront of the mission of the Church for lack of time. We waste time doing what we want and not what is needed. Instead of moving towards people we gravitate towards material things. We want more of everything and less of what matters. Under the guise of development we spend more time with overseas partners and less time with our people. We, Bishops, Pastors and General Secretaries, are becoming so busy that we have no time to act as Christians

Mugambi has another timely word in terms of African involvement in relief and development. "It ought not to be assumed that solutions to social and economic problems worked out by other nations in their own interest can be packaged and exported to Africa for adoption and implementation. Africans must think for themselves" (1997:53).

7.3.7 The return of refugees and Sudanese who had lived in exile

Another challenge that faces both the Church and the government authorities is the return of thousands of refugees and Sudanese who had lived for years in exile. During their stay outside the country refugees had much wider exposure to the outside world. When refugees start to return in big numbers it will most likely bring conflict between them and the people who were in Sudan all through the civil war.

People with different levels of education, different expectations and different views of each other will suddenly have to co-exist. The refugees most likely will try to implement new ideas and change the society to fit the life they have lived in Kenya, Uganda and other countries. Traditional leaders will resent the intrusion of younger people with better skills in their domains.

The challenge for the Church is to guide Christians of both groups towards harmony and cooperation in spite of their many differences. Key church leaders must tap and guide the potential of second level leaders and church members. Old and new leaders must meet and discuss how to develop the Church together. A spirit of competition and suspicion must be avoided. Taking the traumatic history of Sudan in consideration it will need divine wisdom and strong key leaders. While preparing for the event the Church must already put measures in place so that the process can develop as peaceful and positive as possible.

7.4 Relevant theological training

7.4.1 Relevant training within the Sudan context

A Kenyan church leader recently told attendees at a theological training seminar that they were training pastors to be irrelevant in their communities. His desire apparently was to shake them into the realization that they had to take a serious look at their training material and methods. Chipenda writes to his fellow African church leaders: “It is our obligation to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to make the Church relevant in every situation and in every country” (1997:22). If church leaders are not trained to be relevant in their societies neither they nor their churches will have a real impact on the world in which they live and minister.

The author experienced how off target theological training can be when he visited Kakuma Refugee Camp in 2004. I met with an intelligent and creative Sudanese pastor known to me for several years. At the time the pastor was busy with studies at a well-known theological institute in Kenya. He came to Kakuma to share his newfound insights with his church members.

To my astonishment (and probably to the confusion of the Sudanese who attended the teaching!) he taught his people on euthanasia and homosexuality. Euthanasia is completely foreign to Sudan and homosexuality is unacceptable. There were several topics that needed urgent discussion. The Sudanese refugees struggle with social issues like trauma, family disintegration and poverty. The pastor's denomination had for a long time wrestled with questions about polygamy, Levirate marriage and how to understand the suffering of believers. Had he addressed these issues he would have truly benefited his people.

In a changing world pastors need multi-disciplinary training to address the many challenges in ministry. Samita made the following comment on current theological training in Africa: "The curriculum in most theological colleges and seminaries is so narrowly focused on biblical and ecclesiological themes that the trainee pastors graduate without adequate knowledge and skill to respond to the needs of the people they are posted to serve. Multidisciplinary training is essential for effective evangelistic work" (2003:122-123). Andrew Wheeler also writes about the importance of developing a Christian vision that will transform society. "The biggest task for theological education across Africa is to begin to grapple with that question. Unless we are able to begin to articulate a vision of society that places God at the heart and inspires people with a moral vision to serve society, and does so in a way that embraces people of different conviction, then Africa's spiral into corruption and chaos may well continue" (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

In August 2005 a group of Sudanese pastors identified specific areas that need to be addressed during theological training. Trainee pastors need to be discipled and to be taught the principles and methods of discipleship. They must also acquire vocational skills for self-sustenance. General counselling skills and specialized counselling like marriage, trauma, pastoral counselling and helping people with AIDS is essential within the Sudan context. Due to the war theological training institutes must help students to gain personal understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation. Closely related to the previous topic is the acquiring of skills in conflict resolution.

The relation between the Bible and Sudanese culture needs exploration and trainers must be sensitive towards Sudanese culture. On the subject of leadership the importance of moulding servant leaders with a kingdom focus during training was emphasized. Students must be taught to remain lifelong learners. Not all trainee pastors know how to share their

faith effectively with others. There must therefore be some teaching on the practical aspects of evangelism and also on cross cultural missions. Southern Sudanese must be challenged to reach out to North African Muslims since they are geographically, historically and linguistically suited for it.

On economic matters the mindset of dependency must be challenged while good stewardship, accountability and discipline must be ingrained in different ways. Practical aspects of church management and administration must also be discussed.

The role of women in the Church must be explained and children ministry must be emphasized as an essential part of ministry and not as an expendable addendum. Trainee pastors must finally receive teaching and interpreting skills. All the above subjects were identified as critical training issues in Southern Sudan (Summary notes of ECTC Curriculum Evaluation Workshop: August 2005).

It is not possible for all training institutes to address all the needs at once. However, those involved in training must remember the importance of addressing felt needs rather than focusing on perceived needs. If pastors receive intellectual knowledge, practical skills and character formation during their training they will be much better equipped to serve their people in a transforming manner.

Jesus must always remain in the centre of theological training but it must be remembered that He did much more than filling the minds of his disciples with interesting facts! Chipenda writes: "Our preoccupation at this stage is to devise ways of equipping present and future generations with the eyes to see God come to them in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord and redeemer, through areas of their greatest needs" (1997:20).

Sudanese church leaders must speak out when it concerns the training of the Church's future leaders. They must insist on relevant training programs and also get involved by developing relevant curricula for their training institutes.

7.4.2 Curriculum development

All over Africa theological training institutes tend to use curricula developed in the West or by Westerners. There is nothing inherently wrong with Westerners developing theological material for Africa. However, if the material addresses issues foreign or peripheral to the African context it becomes irrelevant.

During the above-mentioned curriculum evaluation workshop at ECTC in August 2005 a group of Sudanese church leaders compiled the following picture of the ideal Church in Sudan (Summary notes of ECTC Curriculum Evaluation Workshop: August 2005).

It must be a Church with a Biblical worldview that is prayer centred and with a strong emphasis on the Bible as God's Word. She must consist of healthy families and be active in evangelism, discipleship and church growth. The ideal Church must be united over tribal and denominational borders. She must have a strong mission focus and be able to endure persecution and other threats. Lastly she must be self-sustaining

In order to reach the above goals Sudanese church leaders must seriously consider developing their own material through which their pastors can be trained. Mugambi challenges all African Christian scholars on this topic "It is the responsibility of African scholars to write and publish textbooks for the courses they teach. We have a rather sad situation in Africa, in which we teach in the African cultural context, and use books intended for use in other cultures. Only African scholars can deal with this ironical situation ... [W]e have to become part of the solution, rather than part of the problem" (Mugambi 2005:28).

Many of the above mentioned goals cannot be attained through intellectual knowledge. It is therefore important that curriculum development is seen as more than just compiling facts in a set of textbooks. After discussions with Sudanese church leaders and through the facilitation of a consultant, Richard Morris, Open Doors adopted the following philosophy for their training programs: "Our mission is to partner with the Church in Sudan to establish the training needed for church leaders to be transformed and to become agents of transformation in their communities" (Unofficial document written in July 2006). The

emphasis is on transformation and that can only happen when training focuses on intellect, skills and character formation.

Sudanese church leaders must accept the long-term challenge of developing curricula through which transformation of trainee pastors can take place. In order to reach this goal a number of leaders must be trained as curriculum writers. They must devote a large proportion of their time, energy and skills to produce relevant, inspiring material. The future of the Church depends in a large way on the quality of her pastors and their training is therefore of primary importance.

7.4.3 Formal and informal training opportunities

The Church in Sudan has an urgent need for trained pastors. There is just as big a need for informally trained leaders. A good example of informal training of key church leaders is the Bible Courses conducted by SCOC in the Nuba Mountains. Many years ago SCOC gathered elders, evangelists and pastors from all over the area together once a year. They then conducted intense Bible studies, discussion sessions and prayer times for a week. The leaders would return to their respective areas and teach their churches what they have learnt. Up to the present time the Bible Courses are treasured events for most pastors and the impact on local congregations is testimony of its value.

Current church leaders must guide the process of training essential church leaders. They must seriously consider the following observation made earlier in the church history of Sudan: “Almost all the scant financial resources available for training for ministry were put into training for the ordained ministry. But such an approach could never hope to meet the colossal need for leadership and pastoral care....” (Werner et al 2000:)

Church leaders must actively pursue informal training programs for elders, youth leaders, children’s workers and women leaders. Short seminars in informal settings can have dramatic results when done in the correct way. It is a challenge the Church cannot afford to ignore.

7.5 Evangelism and missionary work

7.5.1 A huge challenge to the Church in Sudan

Spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth is at the heart of Christianity. Many Sudanese Christians have a strong sense of evangelism and missionary work. However, they are faced with a tremendous task since large parts of their country are still unreached. The Church in Sudan must continue to take the gospel to those who have not yet heard it.

In the Sudan Prayer Guide compiled by SSNET the following statement is made: “Sudan is home to perhaps the greatest number of unreached people groups (UPGs) in the world” (Sudan Prayer Guide: Week Number 41). It is easy to believe the statement since Sudan is such a vast country with many isolated parts that are difficult to access. The war also inhibited evangelism and missionary work for many years.

Adherents to African traditional religion and Islam form the main body of non-Christians in Sudan. Mission work amongst these two groups will be discussed in more detail under separate headings.

Jesus Christ must have the central place in evangelism and missions. Chipenda writes: “The Gospel is God’s power to save all who believe, Jews and gentiles alike; Asians, Europeans, Africans and Americans ... It aims at turning people away from what is worthless and lead them to the only worth and valid destiny” (1997:17-18).

Any efforts that are described as evangelism or mission work, but which do not focus on Jesus Christ or dilutes his role in salvation cannot be truly called Christian evangelism and mission work. The Church in Sudan must not be tempted to accept theories that remove Jesus from his central place as the Son of God and Redeemer of man. At present there is no such danger but subtle attempts by “educated” Christians with a broad perspective on life must never be allowed to confuse Sudanese Christians. There is only one Way to the Father and it is Jesus.

Certain types of religious dialogue can be helpful and it is essential to have respect for others with different beliefs. Some Christians, however, try to reduce boundaries between

different religions so much that it becomes barely discernable. There are also indications that Muslim leaders from the north of Sudan are making an effort to win Christians over to Islam. One of the strategies may be to proclaim that Christians and Muslims actually serve the same God. Jesus will also be given a place of honour, but his position, as God's own Son will be disputed. Sudanese church leaders must lead their people in showing respect to people with other convictions while they actively and unashamedly give Jesus his deserved place.

Evangelism and missionary methods differ widely from country to country. It is therefore important to remember the comment of Chipenda: "Whether we like it or not the mission frontier is always where the felt needs of the people are met in the name of Jesus ... Can we in the name of Jesus Christ tackle some of the root causes of restlessness in our continent and eliminate their bad effects?" (1997:20-21). In Sudan addressing the many physical and emotional needs of a traumatized population may be an important door to reach their hearts with the gospel.

David Dartey also emphasises the need for an appropriate mission theology for Africa. He writes: "The serious problems confronting African society demand a new way of doing theology – conceptualizing both the goal and praxis of mission in Africa today. We have to provide a broad-based Church theology that can deal with these challenging issues – failed statehood; civil wars; ethnic strife; economic deterioration; and so on" (1997:224). His comment has a lot of relevance for the Church in Sudan.

Although a good number of Sudanese Christians are mission-minded many still lack the vision to reach out with the gospel across tribal and geographical borders. Alfred Acur-Okedi writes: "An important factor that inhibits a church from sending missionaries is when the Church is full of Christians who themselves need to be renewed" (1996:14). In Southern Sudan there is a big challenge for pastors and church leaders to develop a mission-mindedness in their church members. They must not wait for funds from the developed world or expect expatriate missionaries to do the work.

Having said this, it is important to accept the comment of Acur-Okedi concerning resources: "The church in Africa faces the challenge to take over the task of sending missionaries. What makes this particularly a big challenge for the church in Africa is the fact that the

church in Africa ... is herself characterised by poverty. How could those from Africa go out with the message if they do not have the means to go? And if they went empty handed to those starving to death how can they demonstrate the love and providence of God?" (1996:18).

Acur-Okedi sees one part of the solution in an aggressive capacity building program in local African churches (see 1996:18). In Sudan several capacity building projects are continuing. Several projects are launched by Christian NGO's and Sudanese churches. In the initial phases many of the programs depend on external funds.

There is more than one way of activating mission programs in spite of a lack of Western resources. Recently a mission-minded Zambian bishop visited Southern Sudan and challenged trainee pastors at ECTC. He told them not to trust in donor funds for their mission programs. He then shared how his denomination is involved in a number of projects without having access to foreign money. The church leadership asks a very small amount of money each month from each church member. The amount he mentioned was less than the price of a small bottle of Coke. Put together, the money proved to be sufficient to build schools and support missionaries!

The Sudan Church must strive to implement a similar method of fundraising or develop other creative ways. It is important that she does not wait for others to provide the necessary funds before planning to do evangelism and missionary work.

Lastly it is important to take note of the distinction between Christianization and evangelization as described by Chipenda. He describes Christianization as "... a detached, cold transmission of Christian teaching, values, dogma, rites and symbols" (1997:24). On the other hand evangelization is "... the proclamation of God's intervention in the world's history made once for all in each human situation" (Chipenda 1997:24). Sudanese Christians and their overseas counterparts must focus on sharing the truth about a living Person whom they know personally if they want to make a lasting impact.

7.5.2 The effect of exposure to Western methods of evangelism and ministry

In the last decade an increasing number of Christian groups visited Southern Sudan. The groups mostly come from America, Europe and Korea. They arrive with the best of intentions but often have very little knowledge of Sudanese church history and Sudanese culture. As an expression of their compassion they normally bring donations of clothes, food, stationeries and Bibles with them.

In many ways the cross-cultural contact is positive and encouraging to Sudanese believers. Through their methods of preaching, teaching and distributing relief the visitors widen the understanding of Sudanese Christians on how Christianity manifests itself in other parts of the world. Such visits also remind Sudanese Christians that they are not forgotten.

Unfortunately there is also a shadow side to contact with wealthy Christians who have developed ministry methods suitable to their home environments. Sudanese church leaders at times come to the belief that they need to use similar methods and accessories to be effective in evangelism and teaching.

In the past three to four years the author personally experienced how outside influences impacted certain Sudanese church leaders. I often receive requests from pastors who were previously involved in pioneer work to supply them with “essential items” without which they feel they cannot do evangelism. Their list of essential items includes the Jesus film, a Public Address system, bicycles, and money for food and incentives for the evangelists. I agree that the items are useful and the requests legitimate. However, I know how the very same pastors walked on foot and mobilized local church members to go with them on extended evangelism trips without any of the above mentioned items. I acknowledge the fact that circumstances and needs change with time. My concern is that the pastors mentioned they could not do evangelism unless they had these accessories. That statement raised some questions in his mind.

7.6 Addressing the challenge of Islam

Officially there is religious freedom in Sudan. It is clearly stated in Article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan written in 1998. The article reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience and religion and the right to manifest and disseminate his religion or belief in teaching, practice or observance. No one shall be coerced to profess a faith in which he does not believe or perform rituals or worship that he does not voluntarily accept." (<http://www.anglicannifcon.org/sudan1.htm> 16 September 2006).

In practice very few Sudanese will agree that freedom of religion is actively promoted. It is nowhere clearer than in the tension between Christianity and Islam.

The relationship between Muslims and Christians in Sudan is complex. Andrew Wheeler gives the following comment on the way it should be viewed presently: "... with regard to the recent situation it occurs to me that it is such a complex situation that nobody is an "expert". Many have a piece of the jigsaw. There is an immense variety of threads, disciplines, perspectives from which the current crisis has to be wrestled with, including politics, economics, geography, colonialism, development, issues of military strategy, issues of ideology, history, culture, religion" (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

Certain issues are much easier to discuss on paper than in real life. It is definitely true of Christian-Muslim relations in Sudan. The author's recent exposure to how deeply people have been affected by people of other faith convictions than their own convinced him of the need for outsiders to approach the matter in a sensitive way.

7.6.1 Distrust between Christians and Muslims

In September 2006 the Cush Consultation was held in Yei. It was a third consultation of its kind and was initiated to coordinate the efforts of Christian NGO's in Southern Sudan. Eighty people attended representing many different Christian organizations and Sudanese church leaders. One of the sessions had the apt heading: "Islam: threat or opportunity?" It was informative to observe the way Sudanese church leaders acted during the discussion time. Through their words, examples and emphasis on specific stumbling blocks they

expressed the feeling many Christians in Southern Sudan have towards the Arab Muslims in the north of the country.

In summary the general feeling was that there exists a huge chasm between Christians in Southern Sudan and Arab Muslims in the north. There was no instigation to “hate the enemy” or encouragement to nurture feelings of revenge. On the contrary, there were appeals to reach out to Muslims with the gospel. However, it was clear that it would take much effort to bring true reconciliation between Southern Sudanese Christians and Arab Muslims. One of the main reasons for the existing chasm is the deep-felt mistrust in the hearts of many Southern Sudanese.

In October 2006 the author conducted a class at ECTC for 21 Sudanese pastors. They came from different tribal and denominational backgrounds. When I brought up the topic of Christian-Muslim relationships it again was clear that deep feelings of distrust existed. There were specific reasons why the pastors showed a reluctance to forgive and forget.

First of all there is the understanding of the word “forgive”. Complete forgiveness means you embrace the one forgiven in the sense of giving him/her a new place of trust in your heart. With the referendum of 2011 in mind the pastors are unwilling to place too much trust in the Arabs. Like the title of Abel Alier’s book “Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured” indicates, they feel that too many agreements were dishonoured in the past. Only after the referendum had taken place and the wishes of the Southern Sudanese were fulfilled are they willing to have more openness toward Arab Muslims.

Secondly the Sudanese pastors are very aware of the fact that the Arab Muslims will not serve under an African, non-Muslim government. When they speak of a united Sudan the government means a Sudan united under an Arab Muslim government. Southern Sudanese want to have an equal chance of ruling the government. In reality they know it is almost impossible.

Andrew Wheeler agrees on the matter. “The Muslim vision has always been for an entire society structured around Islamic law. Muslims have no understanding of being a minority. Islam can only be practised in a majority, in a dominant position ... that really has been

Sudan's tragedy, because Sudan is inescapably a plural and diverse society” (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

Here it is important to recognize the difference in attitude Southern Sudanese have for African and Arab Muslims. During the last civil war a large percentage of the government forces were recruited from Darfur. African Muslims from that region willingly fought in a *jihad* against Southern Sudanese. Their aim was to destroy the power of their fellow African brothers since they were seen as infidels.

In spite of the recent past Southern Sudanese are willing to forgive the Darfuri's. They see them as pawns in the hands of the Arab Muslims. When government funded militias began their war against Darfur the Southern Sudanese showed remarkable solidarity with the Darfuri's. The Church in the South is also very open to reach out with the gospel to the people of Darfur in spite of the past.

On the other hand Arab Muslims are seen as people who will never seek true peace with inhabitants of the South. They are distrusted and viewed as having only evil motives towards the people they fought against for so long. Very few Southerners believe that the Arab Muslims are interested in them as people. Instead there is a strong belief that the government is only interested in the natural resources that abounds here.

The mixture of race, religion and politics (as Andrew Wheeler has pointed out earlier) make the subject of Christian-Muslim relations in Sudan very complex.

7.6.2 Historical background

In order to understand the dynamics between Southern Sudanese Christians and Arab Muslims in Northern Sudan it is important to have some historical background. Andrew Wheeler writes: “Sudan and Christian/Muslim relations in many other contexts have to grapple with the fact that historical memory is extremely powerful and still has enormous power over relationships now. If any change is to take place in the situation now, the power of history and the loosening of its shackles needs to be encountered in some way” (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

7.6.2.1 A Southern Sudanese perspective on Islam

Distrust of Arabs in Southern Sudan has its roots in the first half of the 19th century. Slave raiders and traders penetrated the South and caused untold misery (<http://www.anglicannifcon.org> 16 Sept 2006). Successive Sudanese governments have blamed missionaries of instigating hate against the Muslim Arabs and of blowing up the role of Arab slave traders while downplaying the atrocities of European slave merchants. While there may be some truth in the accusations it does not erase the fact that Arab slave traders indeed committed many atrocities.

Andrew Wheeler shares a personal experience in the province of Western Equatoria where the role of history on Christian-Muslim relations is graphically illustrated (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006)

When I first went to work in Mundri, I was taken to Lui, which is about 15 miles away. It was a major Anglican church centre, and as a matter of importance, as a new arrival in the area, I was taken to see Laro, a huge fig tree in Lui under which the very first Christian service in that area took place on Christmas Day 1921. Laro's importance was that it was the "slave tree" under which for decades Arab slave traders from the north had gathered their slaves in the south before taking them north. So right at the beginning of the Christian presence in Lui it was identified with the overthrowing of that history. What had been a symbol of slavery and imprisonment was quite deliberately from the very first act of the first Christian missionary in the area, made a symbol of the Christian gospel and the gospel of Christian freedom.

Laro stands to this day and is a source of irritation and friction between communities in Sudan. It is used by Christians to say this is the slave tree and the place of slavery has become the place of freedom. It is known widely in northern Muslim communities as the way in which missionaries in the South kept alive the memory of slavery and therefore ensure that

the memory remained vivid and a source of hostility to the present day

Whatever the truth may be concerning the distant past, more recent history convinced many Southerners that Arab Muslims did not have their well being in mind. When the government of General Numeiri dishonoured the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of 1972 in 1983 it resulted in many years of bitter civil war. With the signing of the CPA in January 2005 many Southern Sudanese felt that the government would only honour the resolutions if the international community keep the pressure on them.

The author has heard Southern Sudanese say countless times that they are not willing to trust the Muslim Arabs. Whether we agree with their arguments is not relevant at this stage. What is important is to recognize the deep-seated feelings of distrust.

Apart from emotional resentment the past has had a spiritual impact as well. Lo Polito comments: "This same distrust for all that is Arab is often behind the generalised resistance of the Southern tribes to embrace Islam" (<http://www.anglicannifcon.org> 16 Sept 2006).

In the eyes of most Southerners, including Christians "The Government stands accused of having over the years conducted a policy even of attempted genocide and forced islamisation of the Southern populations, perpetrating, through its armed forces or Government-sponsored militias, horrible acts of indiscriminate aggression towards innocent civilians and Christian communities in particular" (<http://www.anglicannifcon.org> 16 September 2006).

7.6.2.2. Profile of Islam in Sudan

Islam in Sudan consists mainly of Sufi sects that are often seen as heterodox by mainstream Sunni Muslims. The sects focus their devotion on the graves of their founders rather than on the mosque. Healing prayer and different expressions of personal devotion form an important part of their religious life. Some sects have a strong political dimension while others are purely spiritual. Folk Islam also forms a big part of Islam in Sudan. It focuses on the search for power, protection and healing. Muslims who fall in this category wear charms and amulets. They may even visit churches that pray for the sick.

In contrast the Muslim Brotherhood has its roots in an Egyptian anti-Sufi movement. Their desire is to restore an Islamic vision centred on the Qur'an and the mosque. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood aim at renewing and reforming Islam in such a way that it becomes the framework for all of society. Hasaan al Turabi is the current champion of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan (see <http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

Like in several other religions Islam has a desire for a messianic figure. The Mahdi who conquered foreign forces in Sudan was the most renowned in Muslim history. Although Mahdism did not transcend the borders of Sudan it was "... transformed into a kind of Islamic nationalism" (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006). The UMMA party is the powerful political and religious expression of Mahdism in modern day Sudan.

Sudanese Muslims envision Sharia Law as the compulsory set of rules for all Sudanese communities. Some of the better known laws are amputations of hands and feet for stealing and flogging for the public use of alcohol. In 1983 the reinstitution of Sharia Law was given as one of the main reason for civil war to erupt again.

Religiously motivated war or *jihad* was an integral part of the North-South civil war until the signing of the CPA. According to Andrew Wheeler it became "... the cynical political manipulation of the desire of young men for the glory of martyrdom, as well as the enforced enlistment of many who had no desire for martyrdom (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006). Obviously it has an effect on the view many Southern Sudanese have of Islam.

The perspective of Muslims that non-Muslims will always be inferior to them is believed and applied in Sudan. It leads to restrictions in government-controlled areas on non-Muslim religious activities like evangelism and church construction. It also finds expression in the exaltation of Arab culture with the simultaneous suppression of African culture. Southern Sudanese are excluded from real political power and there is evidence for discrimination in employment. All of the above has negative implications for Muslim-Christian relations in the country.

7.6.2.3 Muslim Arabs' historical perspective on Christianity

In the north of Sudan, Arab Muslims view Islam as the actual starting point of Sudanese history. Andrew Wheeler makes the following statement: "Independence has taken that paradigm, that history begins, not with Sudan's ancient history, and not with the Christian Kingdoms that existed in Sudan for a thousand years, but with the arrival of Islam" (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

If we take this viewpoint into account it is understandable how Muslim Arabs have negative connotations to the return of Christianity to Sudan at the end of the twentieth century. After the Mahdi forces had captured Khartoum and killed Charles Gordon in 1885, the latter was hailed as a Christian martyr. When General Kitchener annihilated the Mahdi in 1898 it was seen by many Christians as a Christian victory over Islam. It also inaugurated the new Christian missionary era in Sudan. Political events with a Christian "flavour" strengthened resentment against Christianity in many Sudanese Muslims' hearts.

Missionary influence on Southern Sudanese through the years was also experienced very negatively. Lo Polito explains (<http://www.anglicannifcon.org> 16 Sept 2006).

The Roman Catholic (mainly Italian and German) and Anglican (through the Church Missionary Society) alliance with the British colonial power, and their concerted and overtly expressed efforts to halt the advancement of Islam in the south, has given the Sudanese Government, since independence in 1956, plenty of arguments to accuse Christians, financed by foreign interests abroad, of subversive activities and intentions

In the 1960's missionaries and Sudanese Christians were seen as "...agents of imperialism, dedicated to the destruction of Sudan's independence and unity" (Werner et al 2000:401). The expulsion of all missionaries from Southern Sudan was the result of the above-mentioned resentment.

It is also important to understand the Muslim view on non-Muslim inhabitants of Sudan. Non-Muslims were (and still are) viewed by most Muslims as being subordinate and not

equal to them. Andrew Wheeler writes that Muslims due to their dominant numbers feel that they "... are entitled to mould the country along Islamic lines. This involves a secondary and subsidiary role for Africans and Christians" (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

The recent political developments and apparent willingness of the government to share power are largely the result of international pressure. It does not signal a paradigm shift in terms of Muslim views of non-Muslims. Should international pressure lift the whole political picture in Sudan may swing back again to a "hardliner-stance" on the side of the government.

7.6.3 The way forward

7.6.3.1 Implementation of a peace and reconciliation process

It is important to take the history between Muslims and Christians in Sudan seriously before attempting to pose inappropriate challenges to the Church. The resentment and distrust that exists in many hearts may ask for the implementation of a peace and reconciliation process as a first step. Church leaders must take their members through the process by working through the past. They must do it with sympathetic understanding, but also from the perspective of Christ's reconciling work on the cross. Only then can they pose challenges to their members on reaching out to Arab Muslims with the gospel of love.

Several church leaders made it clear that it is not easy for people to forget the atrocities perpetrated against them in the name of Islam. Unless Christians are assisted to work through their traumatic past many of them will not be willing to have voluntary contact with Arab Muslims.

7.6.3.2 Breaking the cycle of stereotyping

Another challenge is to break the negative cycle of stereotyping. Andrew Wheeler writes: "The use of stereotypes, conventions and popular wisdom about history really has to be confronted. Sudan, like Northern Ireland, the Middle East and many other places, will continue to repeat its saga until people are confronting and struggling with history in an honest way, which has integrity" (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

The atrocities of the past cannot be denied. Church leaders must take a positive approach by making their members aware that not all Muslims were involved in it. They must also point out that not all Muslims have the same destructive mindset. It will not be easy to change the view of Arab Muslims in the minds of Southern Sudanese. The loss of family members and possessions in brutal attacks are deeply etched in their minds. However, if the Church wants to reach out to the north they must work on creating a new perspective of Arab Muslims. Southern Christians must be helped to see them as people in need of Christ rather than as hated enemies.

7.6.3.3 Finding a viable alternative for Sharia Law

Many Southerners resent Sharia Law. Instead of emphasising all the negative aspects of Sharia Law, the Church must actively search for a viable alternative. Wheeler's challenge for Christians in Sudan must be actively taken up. "What I think is needed is for Christians to really grapple with a Christian vision of society and political life, that sees the necessity for a spiritual and moral vision at the core of society, but constructed in a way that is inclusive rather than exclusive. What is offensive about Sharia Law is not that it seeks to put religious and spiritual values at the core, but that it is exclusive. The biggest task for theological education across Africa is to begin to grapple with that question" (<http://www.ccom.org.uk> 23 June 2006).

7.6.3.4 Knowledge of Islam and developing a vision for Muslim evangelism

If the Church desires to actively reach Arab Muslims in Sudan they must provide opportunities where Christians can come to a better understanding of Islam. Theological training institutes must conduct courses on Islam wherever possible. More informally organized seminars must give ordinary church members the opportunity of gaining deeper insight in the Muslim mind.

Insight in Islam without a desire to reach Muslims for Christ is not a profitable goal in the Sudan context. Church leaders must embark on a program where they systematically break down the existing barriers. From there they must build a new desire in the hearts of their members to reach those they often see as the enemy. Key leaders, for example, can encourage pastors under their authority to preach on themes of reconciliation. God's

command of love and his command to take the gospel to the ends of the earth must be emphasized and applied to the Sudan context.

Leaders must lastly exhort Christians to respect people of other religious convictions and not to act in the very same way they so vehemently criticize in others.

7.6.3.5 Conclusion

Christian-Muslim relations in Sudan have a history of friction, distrust and outright hatred. In order to change mindsets and prepare the Church for active, loving outreach to Arab Muslims will take time. It will not help anybody to force external change before real heart change has taken place. The Church must not sit back and wait for hearts to change all by itself. Leaders must actively seek ways of preparing their members for living with and reaching out to Muslims.

7.7 Reaching out to traditional believers

7.7.1 Power encounters between traditional beliefs and Christianity

Most of the fruit from mission work and evangelism in Sudan come from people who previously held to African traditional beliefs. The significant people movements centred in areas where people changed large scale from believing in spirits and idols to the God of the Bible as made visible in Jesus Christ. Power encounters between the Christian God and traditional spirits often played a big role. In many cases evangelists would challenge people to burn their idols. If the idols were stronger than the God proclaimed by the evangelists they would bring terrible harm to them. On the other hand if the Christian God was stronger than the idols nothing would happen to his messengers. Many Sudanese became Christians after seeing that the traditional idols were powerless to harm the daring evangelists.

God's hand was clearly upon many of the evangelistic efforts. However, there is reason to believe that many Sudanese Christians have a shallow understanding of the gospel message. During a recent visit to a Bible School in Sudan the author confirmed with several church leaders that the Church in Sudan must give new attention to basic Christian truths.

For many Sudanese Christians, Jesus is the One who is stronger than their traditional idols. They trust in his power but often do not understand that He is the Son of God who came to redeem them from their sin.

Paul wrote: “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (1 Tm 3:16). There is a great need in Sudan for the mystery of godliness to be explained in simple, understandable terms. And the essence of God’s mystery is in the words of Colossians 1:27 “... Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

7.7.2 Different approaches to African traditional beliefs

In Sudanese church history two main views were held concerning the traditional belief systems. On the side of the Catholic missionaries’ efforts were made to integrate traditional religious insight with Christian dogma, ethics and life principles. Father Arthur Nebel for instance believed that originally there was only one religion and that traditional religions had fallen away at some stage. Although the original message was damaged in the process some truth still remained. Nebel therefore tried to build doctrines that integrated traditional Dinka beliefs and Christian truths.

Anderson writes: “Many educated Dinka today believe Nebel saved Dinka Christianity from complete failure. He presented it not as an enemy of the past, but as something which included and fulfilled the past” (Werner et al 2000:297).

On the other hand there were missionaries and Sudanese evangelists who asked for a complete break with the past. The so-called “Red Army” evangelists is a good example of this approach. “They preached the radical message they had learned in Ethiopia – that the God of Jesus Christ, who was drawing near within the tumult of the war, required a sweeping away of all the old ancestral powers, with all their shrines and sacrifices” (Werner et al 2000:552).

Both groups had the desire to honour God either by making the gospel message more accessible to the Sudanese recipients or to stand against perceived syncretism. In both

cases essential parts of the gospel message were minimized, left out or presented in an ambiguous manner.

7.7.3 Danger of syncretism

The way how integrating the gospel and African traditional belief evolved in Sudan made many Sudanese Christians to feel that the essence of the gospel has been compromised. The author personally heard such views expressed during a recent visit to the area of Abyei. ECS pastors related how a Roman Catholic evangelist took side against them in a court case.

An ECS member had killed a venomous snake that entered his hut. That particular type of snake is seen as a totem of the clan. When rain stayed away at the beginning of the rain season the man was pressurized to bring a sacrifice to the spirits. He refused and a fight broke out. It eventually resulted in a court case. Since ECS pastors stood with their church member they were also put on trial. During the court case a Roman Catholic evangelist stood up and told the whole assembly that he agreed with the accusation that the ECS pastors were in the wrong. He then explained how he still allowed the traditional spiritual leaders to conduct their rituals in his house and in the households of his members.

The Catholic evangelist clearly saw no fault in integrating the Christian message with traditional beliefs. He experienced no tension in merging “effective” elements of a religion practiced by generations of Dinka with the rather new (in a Sudanese sense) Christian religion.

Sudanese believers who have adopted the integration approach often defend the rituals of traditional spiritual leaders. It is especially true in cases concerning healing, rainmaking and the bringing of sacrifices to appease the spirits. In many ways their stance is syncretistic. Tite Tienou writes, “... People influenced by syncretism would be resistant to the gospel. The reason for the resistance is quite simple: many syncretists perceive themselves as Christians with no need to be evangelized. Others have tuned the gospel out because they consider that what they received is sufficient for their needs. Whatever the case may be, syncretism is a serious challenge to Christian missionizing efforts” (<http://www.pastornet.net> 19 October 2006).

The author does not want to make sweeping statements on any particular denomination in Sudan. However, I am personally convinced that people who have embraced a gospel that is closely integrated with traditional beliefs are either fully-fledged syncretists or at least on the borderline of syncretism. Church leaders must evaluate the spiritual insight of their members and strive to appreciate the positive in Sudanese culture without compromising the truth about the Triune God of the Bible.

7.7.4 Bringing the full gospel to Sudanese Christians

Many Christians in Sudan have turned their backs on all the “evil practices of the past”. In Bor, for instance, whole communities have turned their backs on traditional idols after their traditional spiritual leaders were unable to stop the attacks of Nuer raiders. They were “... overwhelmed by the realization that the powers that had controlled their lives for generations had been forcibly overthrown by *Nhialic*, the true creator God, acting in judgment through the raids” (Werner et al 2000:547). To continue serving the spirits was inconceivable. They therefore systematically destroyed traditional shrines and artefacts.

While Christians had turned away from what they perceived as evil and worthless it is often questionable whether they have a proper understanding of the Christian faith. The question is essentially: have they fully turned toward the Christian God as revealed in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of sinful mankind? During a class the author conducted in October 2006 several pastors agreed that many Sudanese Christians know Jesus only as the One who is stronger than the traditional spirits. Many do not know Him as the One who saves from sin.

Paul gave a clear outline of the gospel by which believers are saved. “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter ... and last of all he appeared to me also.” (1Cor 15:3-8).

Again he said in 1Timothy 1:15 “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.” It is essential for church leaders to present Jesus as more than just the Powerful One.

A particularly useful way of helping people to understand the link between sacrifices, both in the Old Testament and in their traditional culture, and Jesus as the perfect Sacrifice is the Chronological Bible Storying method. Since rural Sudanese easily learn through stories the method is suitable to ingrain important Christian principles in a familiar way. In addition it gives people a “big picture understanding” of the Bible since all the different stories are linked together.

The author also found it useful to draw large pictures on the floor of the classroom or in the dust under a “teaching tree”. One such a picture depicts the two roads of life and death. I allow the people who attend the teaching session to literally walk the way of salvation before explaining it to the rest of the group. By involving people it is easy to see how much they truly understand of sin, salvation and eternity. It also opens up opportunities for questions and relevant discussions.

Whatever method Sudanese church leaders may choose to use, it is important that they equip their members with the necessary understanding of what Christianity is really all about.

Apart from a strong emphasis on Jesus as God's Son and the Saviour of mankind, pastors must find ways of explaining the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is not such an easy task in a culture where spirits are often malicious and responsible for sickness and even death.

Another area that must receive proper attention in ministry is an explanation of the ethical implications of the Christian faith. The God of the Bible is everywhere and knows everything. He desires his followers to serve Him with all their words, deeds and thoughts. That is quite unlike many of the traditional spirits who may be deceived. The Dinka deity *Deng Dit*, for instance, is known for the fact that he kills people by striking them with lightning. If somebody is hit by lightning, his or her relatives must praise *Deng Dit* and verbally assure him that he has done a good thing. The fact that they fear and resent his action is not important as long as he can hear their praises.

Christians coming from such a background may think they are supposed to say and do things that will keep God happy even if they feel different in their hearts. They may also assume it is possible to deceive God and that they can continue certain practices in secret. They must be guided to understand that the Christian God is more interested in the heart than in mere external religious acts. They must be taught how to mould their daily lives in conformation to Christ's example and teaching. Marriage, family life, forgiveness, honesty, resisting of temptations and control of the tongue are only a few topics that must be addressed.

In short, church leaders must be disciplers. It is a lifelong process with considerable personal cost and daily challenges. However, that is in essence what Jesus expects of Christian leaders and that is what they must give first priority to in their ministry.

7.8 Peace and reconciliation efforts

Sudan is one of the countries in the world that has been most ravaged by war. Southern Sudanese who are 21 years of age and younger, have known nothing but war throughout their lives. Apart from the civil war between the government and SPLA there were constant factional and tribal fights. In Western Upper Nile widows shared with an Open Doors worker that the majority of their husbands were killed in factional fighting and not in the war against government soldiers.

After the CPA had been signed in January 2005 several serious tribal clashes took place in Southern Sudan. Men of the Dinka Bor tribe clashed with the Moro and Zande tribes on different occasions. It resulted in many deaths. Clan fighting in Warrap State recently caused insecurity. There is also continuous tension between at least three tribes in Southern Upper Nile and Eastern Equatoria. The SPLA and government of Southern Sudan try to keep media covering of such events low since it is an embarrassment to them.

Far more important than being an embarrassment to politicians the ongoing violence is constantly traumatizing hundreds if not thousands of people. It is stated as a fact that there is no family in Southern Sudan that has not been traumatized in one way or another during the last two decades. Faustin Ntamushobora, the Africa Regional Director of ALARM, gave

a lecture on peace and reconciliation in Sudan at the Cush Consultation in September 2006. He made the following comment: “People are traumatized by the long war. People may not admit it, but it is there and it is reflected in their day-to-day life and interaction with others ... The trauma experienced by individual members of the family has tremendously affected every family in one way or another.”

It is especially here that the Church can play an important role in promoting peace and reconciliation. Church leaders are in the unique position of telling the world about Jesus who is the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6). They have received the authority of inviting people who are “without hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12) to receive true inner peace. They can give to traumatized people what the world with all its methods and wisdom can never give them. Jesus told his disciples: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (Jn 14:27). From what she has received from God, the Church must give to the world.

For many years the Church has already been involved in peace initiatives. The initiatives came especially through NSCC (see Werner et al 2000:655-664). NSCC even developed its own Peace Department in 1992 that focused primarily on peacemaking at the grass roots level. Due to the war situation many Southern Sudanese experienced “... a respect for rich biblical teaching on peace and reconciliation, but tension over its application to the military struggle in the South” (Werner et al 2000:656). On one occasion I personally found myself in a peculiar situation where a commander told me I could preach to his soldiers, but without mentioning peace or forgiveness for their enemies. The reason for the qualifications was that he was preparing his unit for a major battle. He did not want the hearts of his men to soften before going into battle.

Talking about peace and reconciliation after the signing of the CPA is different than when it had been discussed in wartime. The Church is facing a new challenge of how to approach their involvement in the peace and reconciliation process in the current situation of peace. Chipenda urges the Church in Africa to “... seek God’s guidance and try to develop in each place a justice-prone, healing and reconciling ministry ... New ministry frontiers must be defined in view of emerging challenges seen through the demands of justice” (1997:23).

Chipenda's approach is very actual for the Church in Sudan. In Sudan there is a great need for justice, healing and reconciliation.

Presently peace and reconciliation must be sought at individual, family, community and national levels. The causes of conflict must be exposed and dealt with. Forgiveness must be received and given as part of the process. The very real areas of hurt, hate and healing must be dealt with as thoroughly as possible.

As can be seen from the above the process covers a multitude of disciplines and must be given to people at many different levels. It is unfair to expect of the Church to take all the responsibility on itself. At the same time she must not shy away from taking an active part in bringing about peace and reconciliation as far and deep as possible. She must give training to a group of leaders who can train and teach others. In the process many lives can be changed from bitterness and fear to healing and hope.

Unlike the non-Christian approaches to peace and reconciliation in Sudan the Church must remember that first of all "Sudanese need to have peace with God and peace with him/herself" (Ntamushobora 2006: Presentation at Cush Consultation). They must strive to give Jesus in a very real and practical way to hurting people since "... he himself is our peace" (Eph 2:14).

When addressing interpersonal and tribal conflicts Sudanese cultural methods in resolving conflict can be used. Care must be taken not to compromise the first need namely peace with God in the process.

One example may be helpful to understand how thin the line actually is. In the past traditional spiritual leaders would slaughter a white bull when a conflict situation was resolved. The reconciled parties had to jump over the carcass to "seal" the peace. There was a very real spiritual dimension to the action. In recent political meetings where conflict resolution took place international observers and politicians enthusiastically jumped over the body of a slaughtered white bull. They were either unaware of the deeper meaning of their action or ignored the fact that it clashed with Christian principles of invoking the help of other gods.

Sudanese analogies that promote true peace and reconciliation can and must be used wherever possible and appropriate.

Key church leaders are vocal in their support of peace. In a joint statement, leaders of all the mainline denominations said: “We urge the warring parties to end hostilities and seek a peaceful solution. We see the present time as a unique opportunity to mobilise the Sudanese people to overcome disunity and alienation and work together to build a real peace on the ground worthy of the title of a new Sudan” (<http://sudan.anglican.org> 7 July 2006).

Speaking out for peace is an important first step. Mugambi’s exhortation must indeed be applied by Sudanese Christians on all levels as well as by Christian NGO’s. “Christians, as individuals and as members of ecclesial organizations have a responsibility to facilitate reconciliation wherever they are, in whatever they do and say” (1997:58). One of the first levels that must receive serious attention is peace between denominations and within denominations.

As was already mentioned, NSCC is already actively involved in the promotion of peace and reconciliation on different levels. The need however is so huge that they must take hands with the many Christian NGO’s working in Southern Sudan. Several Christian organizations have specialized seminars on peace and reconciliation from a Christian perspective. The Church must make use of these services and continue to develop their own programs.

7.9 The Church, environment and development

Every human being has physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Evangelicals at a particular time in the past, emphasized spiritual needs at the expense of socio-economic wants. Adherents of the Social Gospel erred to the other side. Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman remind us of the need for holistic ministry. “The Christian mission is a comprehensive ministry with various dimensions which can be distinguished, but never separated. We believe, therefore, that the goal of mission can only be accomplished through a holistic approach” (1994:36). In Sudan there is indeed a huge need for holistic ministry. Apart from

the kerygmatic and liturgical dimensions, focused attention must be given to the diaconical dimension as well.

The Church in Sudan can not possibly take up the manifold socio-economic challenges that abound in the country. Leaders must discern where they can have the biggest social impact and concentrate their efforts on those areas. Two such areas are health and education.

7.9.1 Health

Health and environment go hand in hand. It is particularly true of isolated rural areas. Getui writes: “The term ‘environment’ includes and encompasses natural features such as landforms, soils, climate, vegetation, minerals and water; energy, transport, population settlements and pollution; human health and wealth, and so on. *Each one of these components of environment contributes significantly to the quality of human life ...* The mission of the church and a healthy environment seem to qualify as some of the integral and core factors that can make life meaningful and worth living” (2000:41 emphasis mine).

Southern Sudan’s harsh climate and polluted water sources are just two of the features that directly affect the quality of life. Additionally many people are settled in isolated areas, which are largely inaccessible during the rain season. The Church can contribute to making life more meaningful and worth living if they can address the area of health.

7.9.1.1 Christian Health Association of Sudan (CHAS)

CHAS came into existence as a result of a concept suggested by NSCC’s Health Desk in 2002. They gave the responsibility of health care to Church Ecumenical Action Sudan (CEAS) in 2003. CEAS pursued the initiative in 2004 and one year later stakeholders that included various Christian NGO’s began to work towards establishing a Christian health association. At present more than 70 people belonging to about 35 organisations are members of the network (Buddingh 2006:17).

Since its establishment CHAS did commendable work. It helped Faith Based Organisations to have better information on the developments in health care in Southern Sudan. It strengthens the Church’s capacity of doing health work. It also made positive contact with

the Ministry of Health of South Sudan and was active in the formulation of a standardized health policy document.

Joint initiatives between NGO's and the Church in Sudan through her different representative bodies are undertaken and cooperation will hopefully lead to true synergy. Dr Henk Buddingh writes: "We hope that this will lead to a situation where Churches and Christian NGOs will provide a substantial part of the health services in South Sudan in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and the communities" (2006:4).

In 2001 Church related NGO's provided an estimated 25% of Southern Sudan's health care while Sudanese churches were responsible for about 7%. The Roman Catholic Church is the main contributor among the Sudanese churches. ECS and PCOS through its Relief and Development Department (PRDA) are also becoming more involved in the health sector.

With the establishing of CHAS the Church in Sudan can be part of creating and developing an overall health strategy for Southern Sudan. This is especially true since CHAS has a good relationship with the Government of South Sudan. The challenge before church leaders is to combine their efforts instead of each denomination trying to do all health work by themselves. Church leaders on various levels are unfortunately prone to desiring control over all medical projects in their areas. Through cooperation between different denominations and Church related NGO's working in the same area, the issue of health can be addressed much more effectively.

7.9.1.2 Primary health care

One important way how the Church can get involved in health issues is to teach primary health care on the grass roots level. Medical workers can be sent for training by their denominations. They can then educate people in isolated rural areas on "... non-technical methods of disease control covering common colds, malaria, malnutrition, dehydration, diarrhoea, ante-natal and postnatal care of mothers and their babies" (Getui 2000:52). It is amazing how many diseases and deaths can be prevented by simple information at the grass roots level.

Apart from seminars trained medical workers can be employed to run basic church clinics. The clinics need not be big or very sophisticated but can be used for treating basic illnesses in the community. In order to set up such clinics responsible partnerships with NGO's must be sought. The Church must creatively search for ways of initiating such projects. Mismanagement of medicine in the past created a stumbling block and it must be dealt with.

Leaders must also think on how to motivate and empower women and youth groups for active participation in the prevention of certain diseases. Pastors or church health workers can, for instance, suggest projects like the sewing and selling of mosquito nets. They have to creatively consider where to get resources like mosquito netting and sewing machines.

7.9.1.3 Clean water

Clean water is one of the most basic and also one of the most urgent needs in Southern Sudan. A large percentage of serious diseases in Sudan are water related. Many rural communities get their water for daily consumption from polluted sources. Diarrhoea, typhoid and bilharzia rob many Sudanese of quality life.

Church leaders have discovered that church related NGO's could offer great help in terms of clean water. They often write project proposals asking for the drilling of water holes and the putting up of hand water pumps. Although it is an effective approach the Church must also think of ways how she can address the issue of clean water herself.

Mary Getui writes that "... the Church as a social institution, and its adherents in their individual capacity as members of the society, have a social and moral responsibility to be involved in environmental management" (2000:51). Environmental management includes making efforts of providing clean water for people in specific areas.

Church leaders must for instance consider holding seminars for women in villages on the importance of clean water. Boiling of impure water can be suggested, but then the issue of indiscriminate cutting of trees must be addressed simultaneously. Suggestions must be practical and must not put a larger work burden on women already overworked. During such seminars the relation between water and water-born diseases must be explained in

simple but interesting ways. Songs and drama can be considered as effective tools of transmitting essential knowledge. Overall the Church must make it clear that God has given us our needed resources and that we must use and manage them responsibly.

Christian men must be challenged and mobilized to get involved in contributing resources so that the Church can take hands with international partners. The Church in Sudan must guide her members to become participators in managing Sudan's God-given natural resources instead of waiting for outsiders to do the work.

7.9.2 Education

One of the most pressing needs in Southern Sudan is the need for proper formal education. This is in marked contrast with the preceding mission era. Doctor Piet du Toit of Future Cross-Cultural Education (FCE) writes: "The initial response of the African population to opportunities offered in schools varied between apathy and hostility, indifference and suspicion" (Class notes: 2006). The situation has dramatically changed over the past few decades. Today education is seen as one of the highest priorities for Southern Sudanese. Many Sudanese who live in neighbouring countries do not want to return to Sudan simply because there are too few good schools for their children.

During the years of civil war young Christian men opened many church schools and women who wanted to share their knowledge with the people in their communities. Pupils often wrote with sticks on the ground where they gathered under a tree since there were no stationeries available. The author personally saw schools of up to fifty students sitting in a circle under a tree and writing with sticks on the ground. The teacher will walk around and inspect their work.

Teachers were in terms of education often only a few years ahead of their pupils. Yet, they were willing to share what they had. Teaching was normally conducted in the vernacular. Although the quality might not always have been up to standard a real need was fulfilled.

Although education is primarily the responsibility of the government, the Church can play a significant role. At present many churches have church schools or desire to open ones. One of their main aims is to give pupils a Christian foundation. That is something they will

not necessarily get in government schools. The initiative is recommendable, but also involves many challenges. The Church must consider how to train their teachers so that they can compare qualitatively with government-trained teachers. They must decide on which curricula they want to use. Presently there are three curricula in circulation namely the Kenyan, Ugandan and New Sudan syllabi.

Ideas must also be generated on how volunteer teachers can be paid. One possibility is to start a school garden where each pupil must cultivate his or her own piece of land. The produce can be sold and the money given as salaries. Partnerships with Christian NGO's working in their respective areas can be fruitful but the Church must take care not to become independent on outside sources.

Last but not the least they must consider if the Western type of education is the best model for education in Sudan. Waruta feels that Africa must develop its own educational systems. He writes: "For African peoples, life was sacred and education was basically an attempt to provide for the individual with the essential capacities for a fuller, happier and harmonious life in his or her relation to fellow members of the community, the physical environment and the spiritual world, all of which no one can exist without. African educational processes emphasized relationships and solidarity." (2000:138). He further feels that Western type education does not fulfil the above-mentioned criteria and that a more African approach is needed in all levels of education. The Church in Sudan need not choose between different models but can consider how to incorporate the best of both worlds in their education systems. It is obviously easier said than done, but all innovations start with considering new ideas. Whatever model the Church will consider to use, they need a lot of resources to open and maintain their schools.

Fortunately the Church does not stand alone. During the three consultations held for Christian NGO's working in Southern Sudan the importance of Christian education was highlighted. It resulted in the establishment of an association for Christian education. Churches and church related NGO's are currently working together to help with the development of church schools.

FCE is a member of the Christian Education Association. They specialize in Christ-centred teacher training. They focus on teachers for church schools and also have plans to

establish model schools in strategic areas. Their first model school has been established in the Nuba Mountains. Although FCE has limited capacity they are offering an invaluable service to the Church in Sudan. The Church must actively participate in such initiatives.

A particularly big challenge at present is the transference of church schools to the government authorities. Financial pressures resulted in many congregations handing their schools over to local authorities. In the second half of 2006 the tendency accelerated causing concern to those involved in Christian education. Doctor Piet du Toit stated in an informal discussion that according to some sources up to 70% of all church schools in Southern Sudan were taken over by the government.

The new tendency disturbs groups involved in the training of teachers for church schools. They fear that the goal of giving the school going generation a solid Christian foundation through Christian education may be lost in the process. Unless church related NGO's in cooperation with the Church take up the challenge of providing financial resources the impact of church schools may be dramatically reduced in a short time.

In Christian education even more than in secular education the school going child must be seen as the real asset. Christian values and principles must be taught, not at the expense of being professional teachers but as an essential part of the Christian school philosophy. Judith and Sherwood Lingenfelter write: "While as educators we focus most of our efforts on schooling, the larger circle surrounding it actually carries the weight of learning. The hidden curriculum is the cultural learning that surrounds the much smaller 'stated curriculum' of schooling. This hidden curriculum is 'caught' rather than 'taught'" (2004:28). In the case of Christian schools the cultural learning must have a distinct Christian character.

Finally the Church can play a positive role in adult education. Many rural Sudanese adults are illiterate and the Church can conduct literacy programs that will benefit them. The author had the privilege of seeing young Christian men teaching illiterate women in Kakuma Refugee Camp and in Sudan. The teachers realized that they had had more opportunities than their predecessors and wanted to share with them what they had received. If the Church will continue to manifest and develop such attitudes she will indeed be the blessing to the world that she is meant to be.

7.9 Summary remarks on the challenges facing the Church in Sudan

The challenges facing the Church in Southern Sudan are complex, varied and in many ways overwhelming. Only a few were mentioned in the section above. Other challenges include the prophetic role that the Church must play in terms of social and political issues.

It is unrealistic to expect that the Church must give its full attention to all the challenges at once. According to an African proverb you eat an elephant piece by piece and do not try to swallow it whole. According to her God-given capacity the Church in Sudan must prayerfully consider where her involvement is needed most and then act accordingly.

Prayer and fellowship with God must not be viewed as an addendum to church activities. It must receive priority. There is a real danger that church leaders can become so involved in secondary challenges that they have no time left for God. The words of Jesus in John 15:4-5 must be taken seriously. "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me ... apart from me you can do nothing."

Nasimiyu-Wasike eloquently captures the essence of how the Church in Africa and particularly in Sudan must view itself. "The call here is to all believers, women and men of Africa, to recognize that they can do nothing of themselves, that they have to turn to God who will make their dry bones live again. In John 2:1-10, Mary believes that Jesus can take our water and change it, transform it into wine. That is, Mary believes that Jesus can change our poor African realities and the broken, wounded African spirit into a Spirit-filled, divined African spirit, which will generate new life and hope for all" (2005:111).

If the Church in Sudan believes and acts upon these words there is hope!

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter I stated the need for an overview of Christianity's history in Africa. By reviewing the three waves of Christianity that swept over Africa it became clear that the first two waves largely failed in establishing the Christian faith on the continent. Several reasons were given. The Church today will do well to remember what happens when evangelism is neglected. Another fact that must not be ignored is the importance of developing an expression of Christianity that is compatible with and attractive to the ordinary person in a particular area.

If the Church fails to root a comprehensible and acceptable expression of Christianity in the hearts of rural Sudanese believers, history may repeat itself in future. The story of Christianity in North Africa must serve as a warning to everyone involved in ministry in Southern Sudan.

Applying additional facts of North Africa's history to present day Sudan it must be noted that Muslims are currently making concerted efforts to convert the people of Southern Sudan to Islam. There are many unreached people groups in the south of the country that may be open to the message of Islam. The fact that Muslim evangelists offer financial incentives may contribute to conversions to Islam.

The Church is furthermore not strong or well established in many of the isolated regions like Southern Blue Nile and Northern Upper Nile. Syncretism like what was found in fourth century Egypt can easily develop. Unless the lessons of African church history are taken seriously, future generations of Christians may pay a heavy price for the negligence.

In spite of the first two waves' general failure there are also positive aspects to reflect upon. The utter devotion of missionaries like Father de Salveira who went to Monomotapa and early African converts like Don Affonso in Congo poses a challenge for modern day Christians. Building God's kingdom could not and still can not be done without somebody paying considerable sacrifices!

The success of the third wave can be attributed to the fact that African Christians were transformed and in turn transformed whole communities through their testimonies and courage. Christianity became rooted in Africa! Secondly the sheer numbers of expatriate missionaries and the zeal they had also played a significant role. Here it is important for Christians today to remember that both the local Church and members of the worldwide Church are needed to build God's kingdom. They can complement each other in terms of skills, spirituality and insights.

Expatriates who come to work in Africa must understand and accept that they don't have a superior Christianity to offer. They must learn from the mistakes of missionaries who worked in the "Dark Continent" in earlier times. It is very important that they truly view their African counterparts as equals. David Scott and George Pilkington who both worked in Uganda are good examples of how equal treatment of expatriates and African Christians resulted in successful work.

Christianity is growing faster in Africa than in any other part of the world! Expatriate Christians indeed can contribute to building God's kingdom here, but they must not come as givers only. They must in many ways come as receivers of what Africa's Christians have to offer them. God's children here have a lot to teach the worldwide Church!

Expatriate Christians must constantly strive to strengthen the local church and support their actions, projects and visions. It is not always easy in practice but they must always search for ways to cooperate as closely as possible with the local Church. When the time comes to release whatever control they may have they must do it willingly and in full trust that He who began a good work in Sudan is faithful to complete it.

It is good for expatriate missionaries to put themselves for a moment in the shoes of those they try to reach with the gospel. I have therefore given several African scholars a "chance to speak out." Sanneh, Mugambi, Mofokeng and others probably speak for many of their less articulated brothers and sisters when pointing out the double legacy left by Western missionaries. Clothing Christianity in Western garb, too close cooperation with colonial authorities and exhibiting an attitude of superiority are some of the main points of criticism. On the other hand there is also appreciation and acknowledgement that expatriate missionaries played an important role in bringing Christianity to Africa.

By highlighting the views of African Christian scholars the author especially desired to benefit present day expatriate missionaries. Learning from the words of people on the receiving end of missionary work they will hopefully show sensitivity and appreciation for African Christians as they strive to serve them. It is not necessary to live lives of guilt or to show excessive timidity, but it is important to be humble, sensitive and teachable.

With the maturing of the African Church indigenous theologies were developed. The legacy of colonialism and *apartheid* in South Africa had a huge influence in the way African theologies were shaped. Although it is understandable the time has surely come for the Church in Africa to look forward. Instead of only pointing bitter fingers at all the injustices perpetrated against them in the past, theologians must develop creative insights and guidelines resulting in positive African theologies. It is therefore encouraging to see the move in theological circles towards developing theologies of reconstruction.

Mission and missions is part of all theologies. African theologies in general also accept the concept of *Mission Dei*. God is the Initiator and Source of all true missionary work. Many church leaders take the missionary task of the Church in Africa seriously as was seen in their writings. They do not only see it as preaching, but as being involved in a holistic mission with kerygmatic, diaconical and liturgical dimensions. African Christians are by nature suited to guide the Western Church in specific aspects of holistic missionary work. Their spontaneous outreach to people in need and their focus on relationships can bring new vitality to the worldwide Church.

After looking at the general picture of Christianity in Africa I focused on Christianity in Sudan. The slow and hazardous beginning of missionary work in Southern Sudan must surely humble modern day missionaries! It must give them an appreciation for what their forebears have done. In spite of great resistance and many deaths devoted men and women took the torch of faith to isolated areas. The lives and work of Comboni, Archibald Shaw, Kenneth Frazer and other pioneers must not be forgotten. Christians today do not have to repeat their mistakes, but they will do well if they emulate their commitment.

A negative perception of foreign powers was developed among Southern Sudanese due to contact with Arabs, Turks and European slave traders. This perception combined with deep roots in traditional religions at first resulted in a meagre spiritual harvest. Both missionaries

and politicians have also made many mistakes. The Southern Policy and Spheres System must be rated as two of the worst blunders made by politicians. On the missionary side slowness in developing local leadership inhibited a natural development of a truly Sudanese expression of Christianity. Like all people everywhere in the world they were men and women of their time. Christians today must reflect upon history and then try to view themselves as objectively as is possible. They may find history helpful in the sense of revealing to them their own blind spots.

Fortunately the arduous sowing on apparently barren soil eventually resulted in a special spiritual harvest. Often dedicated missionaries sowed the first seeds. In many cases church growth was a blend between expatriate missionary and Sudanese Christian initiatives. However, Sudanese believers had done most of the time the real work. Without downplaying the important role of people like Bishop Gwynne, Paul Gibson and Thomas Lambie it must be acknowledged that the amazing church growth, which took place in the twentieth century mostly, came about through the efforts of Sudanese Christians. Men like Andrea Vuni, Andarea Apaya Jonathan Mamuru and Lual Ayei are but a few examples. Hundreds of unknown young men and women led huge people movements that rooted Christianity in areas previously resistant to it. Unions like the Mother Union of ECS and youth groups contributed in significant ways to the expansion and acceptance of the Christian faith. Expatriate Christians who currently work in Sudan must reflect upon the historical facts mentioned above and develop their programs accordingly.

An indigenous Church emerged and eventually took responsibility for rooting Christianity in the hearts of Sudan's inhabitants. It could not happen in any other way since all missionaries were expelled from Southern Sudan in 1964. What happened after all missionaries had left had been nothing short of a miracle. Contrary to what many missionaries thought would happen the Church in Sudan did not disintegrate, but grew in a very special way. It is important for expatriate Christians ministering in Sudan to remember this fact. They have much to give and must do it with sincere devotion. At the same time they must keep in mind that their contributions and presence is not indispensable. When the time comes for them to leave the local Church will continue to carry the torch of faith forward.

Civil war is always regrettable. However, while researching the ways the Church in Sudan grew during the disruptive years of Sudan's civil war I was reminded of Isaiah 55:9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." God used barely literate uneducated young men and women to lead big people movements. Lonely evangelists pastured congregations deep in the bush and planted many new churches. New believers took the gospel with them to very difficult areas. Samuel Ayoli of the Jur tribe is a good example of what a new believer can do in the power of God even when placed in a predominantly Muslim town. We must never underestimate what God can do through new or untrained believers!

On the negative side it was seen how the civil war led to the separation of trained pastors and their congregations. No one can expect such a situation to be without problems and tensions. Although the decision of pastors to leave the country was often inevitable it affected many relationships. New leaders emerged who normally had no theological training. Relations between the new leaders who stayed with their people and the trained pastors who officially were in charge of the different churches have soured on many occasions. As was said in the challenges on leadership issues, the official church leaders have to deal with the difficult situation as soon and as sensitively as possible.

After the signing of the CPA in January 2005 a whole new dynamic was set in motion. Sudanese leaders on all levels must start to function in a country that up till 2005 only knew war and destruction. Church leaders have to face numerous challenges that can easily overwhelm them if not dealt with in a wise way. Dependence on God is now needed more than ever!

Issues concerning leadership need to be addressed urgently since many divisions and church splits occurred due to leadership problems in recent times. The Church in Sudan must strive to maintain and develop a unique expression of Christianity that will be embraced by the thousands of rural believers. Church leaders must further prioritize where they can have the biggest impact on the socio-economic life of the people in Southern Sudan. Understanding their limitations they must constantly strive to be relevant; a source of hope and comfort. Peace and reconciliation initiatives must be seen as a high priority since a lack of it will affect many other areas of ministry and life.

The challenge of the Church in Sudan for evangelism and missions must be emphasized. It was seen that Sudan may be the country in the world with the most unreached people groups. Sudanese evangelists are willing to do what they can and often move out with great zeal to the unreached African tribes in Southern Sudan. Darfur is also becoming an important mission focus for many Sudanese and expatriate Christians. The immensity of the task, logistical problems and the severity of the country's climate can become overwhelming. Local and international initiatives must therefore be combined to make the biggest impact possible.

A deep distrust and in many cases bitter resentment makes it difficult for many Southern Sudanese Christians to show the same zeal towards evangelizing Arab Muslims. The deep wounds of the civil war in many cases still need healing. Christians in Southern Sudan are geographically in the best position to take the gospel to Muslim North Africa. However, as was shown a process of peace and reconciliation must often precede such endeavours.

Last but not the least Sudanese church leaders must receive relevant theological training. They and their tutors must be exposed to the history of Christianity on their continent and in their country since there is so much to be learnt. From reflecting on the past they must be confronted with the realities they will have to deal with in their day to day ministry. All of their ministry must be based on God's wisdom. Therefore they must be thoroughly grounded in the Word of God. Training must be much more than just filling the minds of trainee pastors with knowledge. Character formation must be an integral part of every curriculum.

The Church will be as strong as its leaders and therefore theological training must be viewed as one of the highest priorities. It is my desire that what has been written in this thesis will be used in a small way as a resource tool in ECTC and other theological training institutes. That alone would have made the writing of it more than worthwhile!

It is appropriate to give the last word to a Sudanese composer called Mary Alueel Ngongdit Garang. In the parts of her song that I am quoting she reminds us of what God did in Sudan in the past, exhorts people to do what they can in the present, while gratefully remembering that "the God who has no end" also has the future in his hands.

Let us give thanks:

Let us give thanks to the Lord

In the day of devastation;

And in the day of contentment

Jesus has bound the world round with the pure light of the word of his Father

When we beseech the Lord

And unite our hearts and have hope,

Then the *jok* has no power. God has not forgotten us.

Evil is departing and holiness is advancing,

These are the things that shake the earth.

Do not look back: we are the people

Who have received the life of Christ.

Let us show forth the light

Of the Son of God.

Do what you are able to do

According to the gift, which has been given you.

Let the Name of God be praised,

He who has not changed his laws.

Everything that occurs every day,

Happens as it has been written.

The Lord's program (sic) remains constant

As he has determined it.

We are in awe of you, our Father,

The God who has no end;

Catch us (as we fall),

And show us the ways of life.

Do not look back: we are the people
Who have received the life of Christ.
Let us show forth the light
Of the Son of God.
Do what you are able to do
According to the gift which has been given you

(Quoted by Nikkel 2001:314-316)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIC - African Indigenous Churches
AIC - Africa Inland Church
ACS - American Colonization Society
ACS - Anglican Church of Sudan
AM - American Mission
BCMS - Bible Churchman's Missionary Society
CEAS - Church Ecumenical Action Sudan
CHAS - Christian Health Association of Sudan
CMS - Church Missionary Society
CPA - Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CTC - Cush Theological College
CWME - Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
DOT - Diocese of Torit
DRC - Dutch Reformed Church
ECS - Episcopal Church of Sudan
ELC - Evangelical Lutheran Church
ERCM - Evangelical Revivalist Church Moru
ESEM - Eastern Sudan Evangelical Mission
ECTC – Emmanuel Christian Training Centre
FCE - Future Cross-Cultural Education
GTC - Gideon Theological College
IDP's - Internally Displaced Refugees
IMC - International Missionary Council
JET - Joined Evangelistic Team
KBTC - Koboko Bible Training Centre
KMBS - Kakuma Mobile Bible School
LMS - London Mission Society
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
NSCC – New Sudan Council of Churches
RECS - Reformed Episcopal Church of Sudan

SCOC - Sudanese Church of Christ
SCC - Sudan Council of Churches
SIM - Sudan Interior Mission
SOP - Sudan Outreach Programme
SPC – Sudan Pentecostal Church
SPLA - Sudan People Liberation Army
SPG - Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
SSNET – Sudan Support Network
SUM - Sudan United Mission
TEE - Theological Education by Extension
TEKAN - The Evangelical Church of Christ in Nigeria
TPC - Trinity Presbyterian Church
TTI – Timothy Training Institute
UMCA - Universities' Mission to Central Africa
UPC - United Presbyterian Church
VSG - Voluntary Service Group
WCC - World Council of Churches

